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DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS:

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ORIGINAL READINGS FOR A YEAR,

ON SUBJECTS FROM

SACRED HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, GEOGRAPHY, ANTIQUITIES, AND THEOLOGY.

ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

BY JOHN KITTO, D.D. F.S.A.,

EDITOR OF 'THE PICTORIAL BIBLE,' 'CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE,' ETC., ETC.

Evening Series.

ISAIAH AND THE PROPHETS.

165

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PREFACE

THE present Volume completes the series of Illustrations of the Old Testament. It will be found, like the preceding Volumes, to possess a distinctive character of its own, reflected from the equally distinctive character of the Books which it illustrates. The number and variety of these Books impart a more miscellaneous aspect to this Volume than belonged to any of its predecessors; but it is not likely that this will be regarded as a disadvantage to it. The selection of subjects was also thus rendered more than usually arbitrary; but we trust it will be found, that the selection has been made with due regard for the gratification of the readers for whose use the work is primarily designed.

The fulfilment of prophecy is a subject that scarcely comes within the scope of this Work; nor would the entire Volume, to the exclusion of all other matter, have sufficed for the adequate treatment of so large a theme. The subject has not, however, been altogether overlooked. Some of the prophecies which have been fulfilled by historical facts or local circumstances, or which have obtained recent corroboration from ancient monuments, have been selected for consideration. In the selection of these, the author has been mainly guided by that sympathy with his readers, which enables a writer of some experience to judge, or rather to feel, what would be most acceptable to his own public; and partly, also, by a natural preference for that which his observation and research might enable him most freshly to illustrate. From both considerations, and from the further wish of diversifying the Volume by biographical and historical materials, much attention has been given to the prophecies which refer to the person and exploits of Cyrus, who occupies so peculiar a position in the prophecy of Isaiah.

The Readings of this Volume comprise some conspicuous examples of the fulfilment of local prophecies. But into this class of subjects, although congenial to our own tastes, we have not entered so largely as we might have done, in the belief that it has already received most sufficient treatment in books which have had very extensive circulation.

We have not failed to render the recent discoveries at Nineveh available for the illustration of the Scripture facts and prophecies which refer to Assyria. In the hope of rendering this source of information more interesting, we have introduced a larger number of engravings than any other of our Volumes contain. Those which comprise Assyrian subjects have been copied, with care, chiefly from the sculptures in the British Museum, or from M. Botta's great and costly work on Nineveh, for the free use of which by our artist, for the purposes of this Volume, we are glad to have this opportunity of expressing our obligations to the Senatus Academicus of Glasgow University.

The encouragements of various kinds which the Author has received during the progress of this Work, have been most refreshing; and he cannot now allow himself to doubt that the same will attend him to its close.

London, May 29 1852.

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DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Fourteenth Week—Sunday.

PROPHECY.

We now enter upon the large and interesting field which, in the books of prophecy, is spread out before us. But we may pause for a moment at the gate, to ask what is the nature of prophecy, and what the character and functions of the prophet.

Of these, too limited an idea is usually entertained. It is commonly understood that prophecy is merely the foretelling of things to come, and that the prophet is merely one by whom, through the power given him from on high, such things are foretold. But prophecy contains more than this; and the prophet is this and something more. In the larger Scriptural sense, prophecy may be defined as the revelation of God's will and purpose with regard to mankind, made known through the instrumentality of certain persons chosen and inspired for this end, by means of doctrine, precepts, symbols, records, and predictions. A prophet, therefore, in this comprehensive sense of the word, is a person raised up by God, to teach men what He requires from them, and what they may expect from Him. Hence the prophets were the Lord's messengers to his people and to the world. They were appointed to make known his will,—to declare his judgments,—to denounce the sins of rulers and subjects,—to warn, to threaten, and to exhort: they were to instruct the people in the doctrines of religion, and to enforce the obligations which those doctrines involved,—and generally to do whatsoever was needful to be

done in order to promulgate the will and promote the service of God. Thus the prophets were no less teachers and rebukers, than foretellers of things to come.

From this idea of the prophetic function, it necessarily follows, that the prophets spoke not as from a man to men; but as those entrusted with direct authority from God, to speak in his name to sinful men,—delivering, as his ambassadors, that which He had imparted to them in some of the modes by which his will was made known. Hence they came not before the people as the teachers of the Gentiles, with moral discourses, metaphysical treatises, or philosophical reasonings,—but stood forth to make known the will of One above them, and to express higher thoughts and purposes than their own, with the trumpet-words of: "THUS SAITH THE LORD."

The Hebrew word for a prophet is NABI, which comes from a word that signifies to boil up, to boil forth as a fountain,—and hence to pour forth words as those do who speak with fervor of mind, or under a Divine inspiration. The word, therefore, properly describes one who speaks under a peculiar fervor, animation, or inspiration of mind, produced by a Divine influence; or else one who speaks, whether in foretelling future events, or in denouncing the judgments of God, when the mind is full, and when the excited and agitated spirit of the prophet pours forth the commissioned words, as water is driven from the fountain. The very name, therefore, strongly manifests the constraining power from above by which the prophets were moved, and through which they spake.

Although, as we have seen, the office of the prophet was not confined to the prediction of future events, but embraced much besides; and although it is thus necessary to enlarge the common idea of the prophetic office, we must be careful not to enlarge it too greatly. Thus, in regard to teaching, as in other respects, the office of the prophet was extraordinary rather than ordinary. As his ordinary servants and teachers, God appointed the priests and Levites. They taught what the law, as it stood, or appeared to stand, enjoined; and they performed the sacred rites which it demanded. But when, un-

der this more formal teaching, the nation slumbered; when they came to rest on the mere letter of the law; when they misapprehended its real character; or when they turned away from it,—then appeared the prophet to rouse, to excite, to warn the people, and to call them back to the real purport of their own institutions. This explains the circumstance, that in times of great moral and religious corruption, when the ordinary means no longer sufficed to restrain the people, the number of the prophets greatly increased.

Though extraordinary ministers of religion, the prophets stood not apart from the law, nor were in any way independent of it. That the Lord would, from time to time, send such prophets, as they were needed, had been expressly promised by Moses himself, who, by a special law, secured their authority and safety.* But in their labors, as respected their own times, they were strictly bound by the Mosaic law, and not allowed to add to it or diminish aught from it. What was said in this respect to the whole people, applied also to them.† We find, therefore, that prophecy always takes its ground in the law, to which it refers, from which it derives its sanction, and with which it is fully impressed and saturated. There is no chapter in the prophets in which there are not several references to the law. The care of the prophets was to explain it, to lay it home to the hearts of the people, and to preserve it vital in its spirit. It was indeed also their duty to point to future advancement, and to announce the dawn of better light,—when the ever-living spirit of the law should break through its hitherto imperfect forms, and make for itself another; but, for their own times, they thought not of altering any of the laws in question, even as to their form, and much less as to their spirit. For all change, for all essential development, they directed the view of their countrymen forward to the time of the Messiah, who himself came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, superseding its ritual symbols only by accomplishing all they were designed to shadow forth.

The great distinction between the ordinary and the extraor-

* Deut. xviii. † Deut. iv. 2; xiii. 1.

dinary teachers, the priests and the prophets, was, that the latter were inspired. This naturally suggests the inquiry, What was the nature of this inspiration under which the prophets spake and acted? To examine this matter fully, belongs not to this place; and is, after all, of little real consequence to those who are enabled to believe what the Scripture itself teaches,—that it was complete, and was in all respects fully adequate to the end to be attained.* Where the end was external action; where it was the instruction of God's people in regard to the present or the future; whether it were to be given by word, by writing, or by both; whether for temporary ends, or with a view to perpetual preservation,—the prophets are clearly represented as infallible,—which, as regards them, means that they were incapable of erring or deceiving with respect to the matter of their revelation. How far this object was secured by direct suggestion, by negative control, or by an elevating influence upon their natural powers, is a question of little practical importance to those holding the only essential doctrine—that the inspiration was in all respects such as rendered those who received it incapable of error. Any inspiration beyond this could not be needed; any less than this would be worthless.

The prophet usually received, in the first instance, a supernatural call or appointment to his office. Yet was he not thereafter always in a state of inspiration, or infallible in all his words and conduct. We may trace error in the merely human conduct and speech of most of the prophets. It was only when they received special intimations of the Divine will, and felt that they were authorized to speak IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, that they claimed to be, or were deemed to be, inspired. There is a remarkable instance of this in the case of Gad the seer, who, although in his merely human judgment he warmly approved and encouraged David's intention to build a temple to the Lord, was presently after constrained to go back, and, as a prophet, forbid, in the name of the Lord, the execution of this design.

* See 2 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 21.

In regard to the mode in which the will of the Lord was imparted to the prophet, all inquiry is more curious than profitable. It may, however, be inferred, from the expressions used in Scripture, as well as from some distinctly recorded instances, that the most usual mode of communication was by means of immediate vision—that is, by the presentation to the prophet of the matter to be revealed, as if it were to the prophet an object of sight. If this were the common mode, it was not, however, the only one. Some things in the prophecies require us to suppose that they were made known to the prophet just as he made them known to others—by the simple suggestion of what he was to say, or by the dictation of the words he should utter.

A question has been raised as to the mental and bodily state of the prophet when under the influence of these Divine operations. Was he as fully in possession of his natural faculties, as completely master of himself, then, as at other times; or was he, on the contrary, in a condition of ecstacy—in a state of passive subjection to a higher power, which held his own faculties in temporary but complete abeyance? Interpreters and readers, who come to the Bible with minds full of classic lore, remember that the prophets and diviners of the heathen world, during their seasons of pretended inspiration, exhibited the signs of outward excitement even amounting to insanity, and they are prone to seek signs of the same kind of rapture and entrancement in the Hebrew prophets. On the other hand, the early Christian writers, who lived in the times of paganism, speak of this intense and frenzied excitement as specially characteristic of the delusive pagan inspiration; and point with gratification to the contrast offered by the calmness, self-possession, and active intelligence of the Hebrew prophets; and we think these were right. Look at the only instance in which Scripture places the demeanor of a prophet of the Lord in direct comparison with that of the heathen prophets: and contrast the frantic excitement, the leapings, and the cries of the prophets of Baal, with the calm, dignified, and solemn attitude of Elijah. That there are instances of showing excite-

ment under inspiration, is not to be denied. But too much stress has been laid upon these special instances; and an eminent divine, who sees more of ecstatic movement in the Hebrew prophets than we are prepared to do, has yet supplied what appears to us the right rule of judgment in this case. He says: "The state of ecstacy, though ranking high above the ordinary sensual existence, is yet not the highest, as appears from Num. xii., and the example of Christ, whom we never find in an ecstatical state. To the prophets, however, it was indispensable on account of the frailty of themselves and the people. This forcible working upon them of the Spirit of God would not have been required if their general life had been altogether holy; for which reason we also find ecstacy to manifest itself the stronger the more the general life was ungodly; as, for instance, in Balaam, when the Spirit of God came upon him, and in Saul,* who throws himself upon the ground, tearing the clothes from his body. With a prophet whose spiritual attainments were those of an Isaiah, such results would not be expected."†

FOURTEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

ISAIAH.—ISAIAH I. 1.

The greatness of Isaiah as a prophet, and his magnificence as a poet, may well awaken a strong desire to be acquainted with his history, and even to realize some idea of his person. We may acknowledge that there is no person named in the Old Testament whom we should more desire to see; and one day we hope to see him. This desire is less strongly felt in regard to the individuals whose personal history and trials the Scripture brings before us; not because they are less interest-

* Num. xxiv. 4, 16.

† Hengstenberg, art. Prophecy, in *Cyclop. of Bib. Literature.* On the general subject, see the *Introductions* of Jenour, Barnes, and Alexander, to their respective commentaries on Isaiah: also Davison's *Discourses on Prophecy;* Bp. Watson, *Of Prophecy*, etc.

ing, but because as we read we form to ourselves an idea of their persons, and with the image thus furnished, we are, for the most part, satisfied. But it is not so with men known chiefly for greatness of thought and utterance, with which the mind can for itself associate no personal ideas. If the incidents of their career and the details of their personal conduct are too few to suggest a notion, right or wrong, of their persons, we feel more strongly than in the case of men of action the need of some description or revelation concerning them, such as may supply that which the mind is unable to furnish from its own resources.

This being the *class* of persons we most desire to behold, Isaiah, as the first of that class in the Old Testament,—highest in inspiration—grandest in utterance—and most powerful in his hold upon the minds of those conversant with his soul,—is the one whom we may most wish to see face to face. That hope we must dismiss for the present; and there is no physiognomy in the few facts we know of him.

Isaiah was the son of Amoz. There was a remarkable prophet called Amos, and in regard to time, Isaiah might have been his son. But it was not so. There is a very essential difference in the names, which common readers may be apt to overlook. The prophet's name is Amos, whereas the name of Isaiah's father is Amoz or Amotz. This is too plain to be disputed; yet some of the Jewish rabbinical interpreters still make out a prophetical descent for Isaiah, in accordance with their own singular canon, that when the father of a prophet is named, the father was himself a prophet. The ancient Jews, however, were not behind the moderns in the desire to find an illustrious birth for men of intellectual or spiritual greatness—as if such greatness were not in itself enough, or as if high birth could in any degree enhance it. Genius—to use the conventional word for God's greatest gift—is indeed often associated with high rank; but in that union, it is not rank that honors genius, but genius that glorifies rank. It has thus been sought to be made out that Isaiah was even of royal birth; but for this there is nothing better than a rabbinical tradition,

which affirms that he was the son of Amoz, a brother of King Amaziah. The tradition seems to have been formed to account better for the high standing of the prophet in the court of King Hezekiah. But it is possible to furnish a reason for the high estimation in which a prophet, so honored of God as Isaiah, was held by so pious a king as Hezekiah, without resort to such an explanation—which is even without so much foundation in probability as might be found in the fact that the king had a brother called Amoz—for even this is a pure conjecture. Under such conjectures, we might make of biography, and of history too, anything we pleased; and the comparatively austere but needful rules of modern criticism will not admit them for a moment. It seems clear that Isaiah was a native of the kingdom of Judah; and that his ordinary abode was at Jerusalem, is evident from several passages of his prophecies, from which it also appears that he was married, that two sons were born to him in the reign of Ahaz, and that he gave names to them symbolical of important future events in the history of the Jews.*

The prophetic career of Isaiah seems to have covered a large and interesting portion of historical time. The introductory verse describes him as prophesying in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The vision in chap. vi., which has every appearance of having been his introduction to the prophetic office, is dated "in the year that King Uzziah died." It has, however, been inferred that Isaiah had for some time previously been engaged in public affairs, as it is expressly stated in 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, that he composed the complete annals of Uzziah's reign. The force of this conclusion is not very manifest, as it is by no means necessary that a historian should take part in, or even be contemporary with, the events he records. There is, however, no reason to doubt that he was of adult age when called to the prophetic office in the last year of Uzziah's reign. We have, further, an explicit historical statement that he was engaged in his high work till the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, when he was charged with a message

* Isaiah vii. 3; viii. 1, 4.

to that king concerning the reception he had given to the ambassadors from Babylon. Isaiah xxxix. Uzziah died in 759 B.C., and the fifteenth year of Hezekiah coincides with 712 B.C. It is therefore certain, that, on the lowest computation, Isaiah exercised the prophetic office for forty-seven years, being one year under Uzziah, sixteen years under Jotham, the same under Ahaz, and fifteen years under Hezekiah. But it is probable that he lived much longer. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 32, it is declared that "the rest of the acts of Hezekiah" were written "in the vision of Isaiah," which appears to imply that he survived the king, and wrote the acts of his reign up to his death. As Hezekiah lived fourteen or fifteen years after the above circumstance, this would enlarge Isaiah's public career to sixty-one or sixty-two years. If he survived Hezekiah, he probably lived some time into the reign of Manasseh. This supposition is confirmed, not by any direct Scriptural evidence, but by all the traditional accounts which have been handed down to us, which allege that he was put to death in the time of Manasseh by being sawn asunder. If this be true, and supposing him to have been not more than twenty-five years old, when he commenced to exercise the high functions to which he had been called, he could not well have been less than ninety years of age at the time of his death—probably rather more than less.

The common Jewish account is, that the offence alleged against the aged prophet was that he had said he had seen Jehovah; for which it was urged that he ought to die, in accordance with Exodus xxxiii. 20, "No man can see my face and live." But we doubt that this peculiarly rabbinical mode of forcing the sense of Scripture had such early origin; and of all the kings that ever reigned, Manasseh seems to have been least likely to have sought the real or supposed sanction of the law for his proceedings. The idolatrous abominations of that king could hardly fail to draw forth an indignant protest from the venerable prophet, if then alive; and in that case, it is scarcely probable that so fearless and authoritative a witness against iniquity in high places, would escape sharing the doom of the numerous worthy victims, whose innocent blood filled

the streets of Jerusalem. The testimony of Josephus, also, points in this direction when he says, that Manasseh "barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with innocent blood."

That Isaiah was sawn asunder, as the Jews allege, we should have been inclined to doubt, on the ground that there does not appear to have been any such mode of inflicting the punishment of death among this people. But St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, counts being "sawn asunder" among the deaths to which the ancient saints had been subjected: and as Isaiah is the only one to whom this death has been ascribed, it seems likely that the traditional memory of the fact existed in the time of the apostle, who thus gives to it his inspired sanction. It is, therefore, a point which we shall not question, although it cannot positively be affirmed as a fact, any more than the statement that this dreadful death was inflicted with a *wooden saw*, in order to increase the torture and protract the agony.

We are further told that the corpse of this chief of prophets was buried hard by Jerusalem, under the Fuller's Oak, near the Fountain of Siloam; whence it was in a later age removed to Paneas, near the sources of the Jordan; and that it was eventually transferred, in A.D. 404, to Constantinople; but in all this there is nothing on which we can rely.

This is all that history knows, and all that tradition pretends to know, of the life, the death, and the sepulture of Isaiah.

FOURTEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES.—ISAIAH I. 1.

ALTHOUGH all the prophets were moved by the same Spirit, they were men of different characters, and of different natural gifts and attainments. This appears not only in so much of

their personal history and sentiments as can be gathered from their books, but from the style and manner of their utterances.

The prophecies of Isaiah are eminently sublime and magnificent, not only in their style and expression, but in their objects; and these together have directed more attention to this book, among both Jews and Christians, than to any other in the prophetical Scriptures. It has the very important distinction, of being more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other of the sacred books, excepting only the Psalms; and the direct manner in which the divinely-inspired writer speaks of the Messiah—his birth, his sufferings, and his kingdom—has even rendered his prophecies of eminent service in establishing the conviction that the Lord Jesus was He of whom the prophets spoke. Nor can we doubt that He often referred to Isaiah, when He opened the understandings of the disciples at Emmaus, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day." Luke xxiv. 45, 46. It is especially this distinction which has procured for Isaiah the title of "the evangelical prophet," due probably to Jerome, who says that Isaiah was not only a prophet, but more than a prophet—even an evangelist; and declares that so distinct were his predictions, that he seems to speak rather of things past than things to come. He even calls Isaiah an apostle; and, indeed, there is no portion of Scripture which so distinctly connects the Old Testament with the New. Another (Eusebius) calls Isaiah the greatest of the prophets; and the Jews themselves designate him as "the great prophet."

Bishop Lowth was the first to point out that the prophetical books are essentially poetical; and that, with the exception of portions which, if brought together, would not exceed the bulk of five or six chapters, the book of Isaiah is poetry of the highest order. It is to him also that we owe the first clear account of Isaiah's style, although it had been, before his time, highly extolled by Grotius, Sanctius, Bossuet, Fenelon, and

others. The first of these compares Isaiah with Demosthenes, and declares that he finds in the former the utmost force and purity of the Hebrew tongue, as he finds in the latter the utmost delicacy and purity of the Attic language. The one and the other is grand and magnificent in his style, vehement in his movements, copious in his figures, forcible and impetuous whenever he would excite to indignation, or strive to render a thing odious.* To many that will seem faint praise, which merely equals the style of the Hebrew prophet with that of the first of uninspired speakers. But we are to remember that it is of style only that Grotius speaks.

Sanctius expresses himself more warmly ; for he finds that Isaiah is more flowery, more ornate, and, at the same time, more grave and more energetic, than any writer known, whether historian, or poet, or orator.

But let us come to Lowth, who speaks of Isaiah in this strain—"Isaiah, the first of the prophets, both in order and dignity, abounds in such transcendent excellences, that he may properly be said to furnish the most perfect model of prophetic poetry. He is at once eloquent and sublime, forcible and ornamented ; he unites energy with copiousness, and dignity with variety. In his sentiments there is uncommon elevation and majesty ; in his imagery, the utmost propriety ; and, notwithstanding the obscurity of his subjects, a surprising degree of clearness and simplicity."

We will add to this the opinion of some modern continental writers, who have studied this matter closely, and whose views thereon are entitled to a degree of respectful attention which, on more essential points, it might not be safe to concede to them.

One of them† is unwilling to admit that there is anything in Isaiah to be compared, in sublimity of poetry, to the noble hymn of Habakkuk ; but, apart from this, he allows that he finds in the prophecies of Isaiah all that belongs to poetry of the highest order, and such as is rarely to be found in Oriental

* Grotius, *Comment.*, in 4 Reg. xix. 2.

† Eichhorn, *Einleitung*, iv., § 533.

poesy. The same critic assures us that, as well in regard to style and imagery as to plan, execution, and poetic imagination, the utterances of the son of Amoz may rank with the finest prophetical pieces and the most magnificent canticles of the Old Testament. His style is always in perfect harmony with the objects he describes; and as the subjects vary, so his style varies also. If he makes a recital, it is with a natural simplicity, in which the skill of the writer is felt, but not seen. When he exhorts or rebukes, his invectives are piercing and his aspect is terrible. When he casts his prophetic glance forward to happier times, his genius seems to struggle with his subject for the invention of images more beautiful and comparisons more just. The vision of his call to the prophetic ministry (chap. vi.) presents to us an admirable picture, in which all the details are traced with the noblest and richest colors, and the charm of which is enhanced by the majestic simplicity of the elocution. In the first chapter, taking the tone of exhortation, it does not suit the prophet to pour out all the fulness of his spirit, or to allow the flame of his imagination to be fully kindled. He therefore contents himself with groans and sighs over the bleeding wounds and sore afflictions of his people, to whom he points out the way of healing and of life. But with what admirable address his colors are changed when he undertakes to depict the glory and blessedness of the Messiah's reign! Raised above the earth and the mortals who inhabit it, he beholds a new heaven and a new earth. The ancient traditions of his people assume beneath his hand a beauty and majesty which cast the reader into a sublime delight. But his chief merit, and that which gives him a marked preeminence over the poets of the East, is the admirable precision of his expressions, the richness of his imagery, and the perfect contour of his periods. These qualities are remarkably united in his first chapter. He brings to a happy conclusion all that he commences; and in whatever edifice he raises, every stone is fairly placed upon the foundation he has laid. He rushes not precipitately from one subject to another, and under his hand everything takes a proper form and order. Thus, every

image has all the finish and development which the circumstances require; and the antitheses, skilfully produced, form one of the fittest features of the picture he presents. If, for example, he sets before us, on one side, fields given to the flames by the enemy whom God has sent in his anger; he depicts, on the other, the Israelites redeemed from oppression, seated in the midst of the abundance and richness of a plentiful and fertile soil. So, if, in the days of corruption, he shows us the hands of the wicked stained with blood and polluted by carnage, he fails not to contrast this with the time of repentance, when the spectacle of scarlet crime becomes, under the tears of contrition, pure as snow and white as wool. When, in his moral discourses, the prophet dwells longer on the same subjects, he expresses, at first, all his theme in a figurative style, and then explains it more clearly in the proper sense—a process admirably suited to win and detain the attention of the reader.

Another writer,* some of whose works are better known in this country, declares that the diction of the prophecies of Isaiah surpasses in beauty, as well as in sublimity, not only Hosea and Micah, but all the other prophets, and in some parts scarcely yields to the poetry of Moses and of Job. The design of it is beautiful, and the execution excellent. The images are clearly presented under the most natural colors. But that which claims our special admiration, is the rich variety in the traits; and even in those which recur often, as in the pictures of the golden age to come, every one has always something particular by which it is more specially characterized, and in which it differs from all the others. As to the language of Isaiah, a purity, constantly sustained, forms one of its principal characteristics. The style, always lively and animated, takes all the colors which present themselves to the pencil of the poet. It is thus that he is subtle and sublime in his promises, severe and vehement in his threatenings, mild and tender in his consolations, and earnest in his instructions. Lastly, there is something, a certain harmony, in the language

* Jahn, *Einleitung in das Alte Test.*

of this prophet, which charms the ear by its agreeable rhythmical cadence.

Another German author* of high name, acknowledges that the whole of the book that bears the name of Isaiah is, in a literary point of view, far above all praise. The prophecies of Isaiah, he says, take their place among the finest compositions of the golden age of Hebrew poetry. They consist, for the great part, of prophetic discourses. But that which renders them beyond expression admirable, is a weighty style, full of force and dignity, abundant in images, and replete with rich thoughts, which the sacred writer produces with the most exquisite tact. He likes antithesis and paronomasias, and sometimes delights to mingle them together so as marvellously to enhance the effect. If he often repeats the same image, he knows how to vary it each time by always giving to it a new turn, often by the substitution of metaphorical for literal expression.

Another† declares that "Isaiah stands pre-eminent above all other prophets, as well in the contents and spirit of his predictions as in their form and style. Simplicity, clearness, sublimity, and freshness, are the never-failing characteristics of his prophecies. . . . In reference to richness of imagery, he stands between Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Symbolic actions, which frequently occur in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are seldom found in Isaiah. The same is the case with visions, strictly so called, of which there is only one, that in chapter sixth, and even this is distinguished by its simplicity and clearness above that of the later prophets. But one characteristic of Isaiah is, that he likes to give signs—that is, a fact then present or near at hand—as a pledge for the more distant futurity; and that he thus supports the feebleness of men. The spiritual riches of the prophet are seen in his style, which always befits his subject. When he rebukes and threatens, it is like a storm; and when he comforts, his language is as tender and mild as (to use his own words) that of a mother comforting her son.

* GESENIUS, *Der Prophet Jesaia*, ii. 53–55.

† HENGSTENBERG, art. ISAIAH, in the *Cyclop. of Biblical Literature*

With regard to style, Isaiah is comprehensive, and the other prophets divide his riches."

After this solid weight of testimony, we are tempted to add a few lines from Gilfillan's sparkling tribute to the great prophet:—"The uniform grandeur, the pomp of diction, the almost painful richness of figure, distinguishing this prophet, would have lessened his power over the common Christian mind, had it not been for the evangelical sentiment in which his strains abound, and which has gained him the name of the Fifth Evangelist. Many bear with Milton solely for his religion. It is the same with Isaiah. The cross stands in the painted window of his style. His stateliest figure bows before Messiah's throne. An eagle of the sun, his nest is in Calvary. Anticipating the homage of the Eastern sages, he spreads out before the infant God treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gifts are rare and costly, but not too precious to be offered to such a Being: they are brought from far, but He has come farther 'to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

FOURTEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

MEDICINE.—ISAIAH I. 5, 6.

In the first chapter of Isaiah occurs this remarkable passage, in which the prophet symbolically expresses the corrupt condition of man's nature—"Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

The external character of the diseases here employed to express a generally diseased condition, together with the entirely outward character of the remedies, tends to suggest some considerations respecting the practice of the Hebrews in regard to the treatment of diseases. This seems to have been in a very

rude state, as it still is in the East, and to have been among them scarcely less distinguished from the ancient Egyptian and Greek practice, than from that of modern Europe. The Egyptians certainly had made great advances in medical knowledge; but it appears wrong to cite *their* knowledge in illustration of Scripture, unless in those places where Egyptian physicians and Egyptian remedies are expressly mentioned.

It appears, then, that among the Hebrews, as among all nations in the early stage of medical practice, attention was in a great degree confined to outward applications, and what we should now call surgical practice; and the present text is among those which show that, down to a comparatively late period, external maladies were the chief subjects of medical treatment among the Israelites. Perhaps this was partly founded upon the notion, still very prevalent in the East, that outward complaints were more within the reach of human skill, but that internal disorders, being inscrutable in their nature, must needs be left to the mercy of God.

But let us look to the text before us. The three words translated "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores," express well enough the distinction of terms conveyed in the original. The first signifies an open wound, or cut from which the blood flows. The word rendered "bruises," denotes a contusion, or the effect of a blow where the skin is not broken—in short, such a contusion as produces swelling and discoloration. And by the term translated "putrefying sores," is rather to be understood recent or fresh wounds, or perhaps a running wound, which continues fresh and open, and cannot be cicatrized or dried up. The prophet's images all refer to the surgical treatment of these wounds, without any allusion to the internal remedies which, in modern practice, always accompany surgical treatment. Here the neglect of all proper means of healing is simply expressed by the wounds not having been "closed,"—that is, the lips of the wound had not been pressed together to remove the blood, etc. from the wound, that cohesion might the sooner take place. There was, and is, no sewing up of wounds in the East; and hence the edges, healing

without being perfectly united, make the scar of a wound more conspicuous and disfiguring than with us. The only attempt to produce cohesion is by "binding up" the wound, after the edges have been as far as possible "closed" by simple pressure. The binding up, however, seems to apply to all these maladies; as does also, perhaps, the "mollifying with ointment;" by which rather understand "oil,"—that is, olive oil, which is frequently in Scripture mentioned as thus employed; and at the present day in Syria, a mixture of oil and melted grease is much used for the healing of wounds.

The nature of the maladies chiefly brought under consideration, suggests just the kind of remedies which we find specified in Scripture, such as oils, salves, particularly balms, plasters, and poultices,—to which we may add, from Josephus, oil and mineral baths.

The mention of "physicians," in some texts of later Scripture, is somewhat apt to mislead the uninquiring, who do not reflect that this was the general term for those who professed the healing art in ancient times, whether by external or internal applications,—the professions of the physician and the surgeon not being distinguished as with us in modern times. Nevertheless, it is clear that physicians were in later times more frequently consulted than of old; and it is certain that even at an earlier date remedies for internal, or even mental disorders, were not altogether wanting;* but it does not appear that much progress was ever attained in this branch of the healing art. Indeed, from the information we can gather from the Talmud, and other old Jewish writings, it would appear that their practice was of a very simple character, and such as our old herbalists might have been disposed to recommend. These intimations mostly occur in the indications of things that may or may not be done on the Sabbath-day,—thus: "It is unlawful to eat Greek hyssop on the Sabbath, because it is not food fit for healthy persons; but a man may eat wild rosemary, and drink bloom of the herbs;† a man may

* 2 Chron. xvi. 12; 1 Sam. xvi. 16.

† Some plant used as an antidote against pernicious liquors.

eat any kind of food as medicine, and drink any kind of beverage, except water of trees,* and of *cos ikkarim*,† as these are only remedies for the jaundice; but a man may drink the water of trees for thirst; and may anoint himself with the oil of *ikkarim*, but not as a remedy. He who has the toothache must not rinse his mouth with vinegar; but he may wash the teeth as usual, and if he gets cured, he does get cured. He who has pains in the loins must not rub them with wine or vinegar; he may, however, anoint them with any kind of oil except rose-oil. Princes may anoint (dress) their wounds with rose-oil, as they are in the habit of anointing themselves with it on other days."

Amulets were also, it seems, nearly as much in use among the Jews as they are still among the modern Orientals. Their character may be shown from the Talmud. "It is permitted (even on the Sabbath) to go out with the egg of a grasshopper, or the tooth of a fox, or the nail of one who has been hanged, as medicinal remedies." It appears, however, that strict persons discouraged such practices as belonging to "the ways of the Amorites."

A few details of modern practice in the same country may indicate the correspondence of facts to which we have more than once referred. There is no medical education, properly so called, in Syria; and any one who likes is quite at liberty, at any time, to forsake any less noble calling for the healing art. Any individual, high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, may set up as a practitioner at any moment. Almost innumerable are the cases in which poor tradesmen, mechanics, and farmers, suddenly conceiving the idea of practising medicine, buy a lancet, or grind an old knife-blade into the shape of one, and give themselves out as doctors; and, strange to say, all of them find more or less encouragement. Incapacity to read or write, forms no impediment to becoming a physician,

* Meaning water from a spring between two trees, the first draught of which was believed to promote digestion, the second to be laxative, and the third an emetic.

† A mucilage of pulverized herbs and gum in wine.

and we find many of these vain pretenders going about bleeding and administering medicines, from simple colored water to powerful elaterium.

The ideas of even the best informed physicians are a strange mixture of fancies and absurdities. Persons laboring under fever are carefully deprived of cooling drinks: but animal broths, jellies, sweetmeats, walnuts, hazel-nuts, almonds, and such like articles, are freely allowed. Pomegranates and raw quinces are considered as highly beneficial in such cases, and are much sought after.* Our physicians check the disposition of the patient to eat; but the Syrian physician holds that if the patient does not eat, he must certainly die; and so various stews, jellies, soups, and mixtures of animal and vegetable food are prepared, in order to induce a loathing stomach to take something nourishing; while, at the same time, unirritating articles of diet, such as sago, arrow-root, gruels, and other farinaceous preparations, are utterly unknown.

Very few of the physicians have the slightest idea of the true anatomical structure of the human frame; and from this the most serious mistakes result as to the seat and nature of internal disorders. The only difference known between arteries and veins is that the former pulsate and the latter do not. There is, in fact, a superstitious horror in regard to mutilating the dead, which opposes an insurmountable obstacle to the dissections and post-mortem examinations, through which only an adequate knowledge of anatomy and of the nature of diseases can be acquired. Neither does it appear that the Hebrews were in the habit of opening dead bodies to ascertain the cause of death, though we know that the Egyptians were so, and that their practice of embalmment must have given them much anatomical knowledge. Some traces of such knowledge may, however, be found in Job x. 10, 11, and some other passages.

The ancient confidence in charms and amulets is not at all diminished in the present age. Women and children have usually a blue bead or other ornament suspended over the fore-

* Quinces are hawked about the streets with the following cry: "Cure your sick one—quinces."

head, just at the parting of the hair, or a string of blue beads about the neck, to ward off the effects of the evil-eye. Horses, cows, and other domestic animals, have also frequently a blue bead, or a small piece of notched wood; and even fruit-trees and vines are often daubed with a streak of blue as a safeguard against the same evil influence. Among other ridiculous notions, it is held that the windpipe of a wolf will infallibly cure the mumps if hung around the patient's neck. The greatest reliance is, however, placed on written charms. A large majority of all classes and ages have usually some paper, or image, or relic about the person, which confers many imaginary benefits and averts many evils; and during illness various charms of this nature are employed, both by patient and physician, in order to enhance the effect of the remedies used.

It is a doctrine strenuously maintained by the physicians, and implicitly received by all classes, that catarrhal and pulmonary complaints are contagious. Hence, no one will smoke of the same pipe (otherwise usual in the East), or drink from the same vessel, with one laboring under a cold, for fear of catching it. Small-pox is believed to be communicated by a glance of the eye, and, consequently, persons affected by it are secluded from view as carefully as possible.

Of chemistry, Syro-Arabic science is wholly ignorant. A few of the most common mineral substances are, however, used in medicine; but by far the greater part of the remedies employed are drawn from the vegetable kingdom. Yet botany, as a science, is as little known as chemistry. Plants are known only by names, not by descriptions; and, as names vary with localities, much uncertainty and confusion arise from this source.

Bleeding is employed on nearly all occasions with a freedom and recklessness which would appal a European surgeon. This is even done when no disorder calls for it; but under the view of its being a beneficial relief to the system. We have known cases of native gentlemen bled periodically by their own servants, without the intervention of any medical practitioner. Scarification with a razor is much used in all cases of tumors;

and cupping is sometimes practised after a rude fashion. But burning by actual cautery is almost as frequent as bleeding. It is performed with a common iron nail, or a piece of wire, or a piece of lighted touchwood is laid upon the part and suffered to burn out. It is resorted to for the most trifling complaints, and scarcely an individual can be found who has not a lesser or greater number of cicatrices from this cause.

The connection between barbers and surgeons in the East is not yet altogether dissolved; and the members of that which is, with us, a decayed profession, still bleed, leech, cauterize, draw teeth, and perform sundry other operations connected with the chirurgical art. Physicians, so called, confine themselves to the practice of medicine; but those who pass for surgeons act in either capacity *pro re natâ*. The natives have, however, a superstitious dread of all surgical operations, especially such as mutilate the body, and often prefer death to undergoing them. Hence, it is rare to see in the East a man who has lost a leg or arm. The accident or malady, which with us involves no greater loss, is death to an Oriental.

FOURTEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

SCARLET SINS.—ISAIAH I. 18.

In the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, is a minute account of an interesting ceremonial prescribed for the great day of atonement. Two goats were to be taken and presented before the Lord. There a lot was to be taken—"one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat." The goat upon which the former lot fell, was to be offered in sacrifice for a sin-offering; and the other goat was to be "presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness."

There has been much learned discussion respecting this "scape-goat," but into this we mean not to enter, as we refer to this ceremonial only for the sake of a particular circumstance

which is, however, not reported in the sacred text of the law, but is among the additional particulars transmitted by the early Rabbinical writers, who may be presumed to have known what the actual practice was, at least in the shape which that ceremonial eventually assumed. These authorities inform us that, when the lot had been taken, the high-priest fastened a long narrow fillet of *scarlet* to the head of the scape-goat; and that after he had, as the law directed, confessed his own sins and the sins of his people over its head, or (for we are not quite certain as to the point of time) just before the goat was finally dismissed, the fillet *changed its scarlet color to white*, if the atonement were accepted by the Lord, but if not, it retained its scarlet hue. It is to this that the Jewish interpreters understand Isaiah to allude, when he says, in the text before us—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

After the confession over the head of this goat, the animal was consigned to the charge of a trusty person, previously appointed, who conveyed it away into the wilderness. There, as we should have understood the text (Lev. xvi. 22), the goat was to be set free, bearing upon him all the iniquities that had been confessed over his head, "unto a land not inhabited." But the Rabbins say it was not so. They tell us that, under the Temple, the goat was taken away to a place about twelve miles from Jerusalem, where there was a formidable rocky precipice, on arriving at which the animal was cast down from the summit, and, by knocking against the projecting points of the cliff, was usually dashed to pieces before it had half reached the bottom. It is added, that the result of this execution was speedily made known by signals, raised at proper distances, to the people, who were anxiously awaiting the event at the Temple. It is also said that a scarlet fillet, fastened at the entrance of the Temple, turned white at the same instant of time, in token of the Divine acceptance of the expiation which had been offered. We do not clearly understand whether this latter change of color in the scarlet fillet

is intended to be represented as additional to the one which had previously taken place, or that the two are different accounts of a single change. Perhaps the change said to have taken place in the fillet attached to the goat's horns, occurred at the moment of precipitation, and that *then* a corresponding change took place in the fillet at the Temple. It is, however, added, that this miracle ceased forty years before the destruction of the Temple. However understood, it is a singular fact that the Jews themselves should thus assign the cessation of the alleged miracle to a date coinciding with the death of Christ—an event which is usually regarded by Christians as having been prefigured by atoning sacrifices, and which they believe to have been done away with by that final consummation and fulfilment of sacrificial institutions. Thus, according to the account of the Jews themselves, the usual signs of the acceptance of the blood of bulls and goats, as an atonement for sin, was from that time withheld.

The colors that are mentioned in the text, "scarlet" and "crimson," claim a moment's consideration.

"Scarlet" is often associated with purple and blue in Scripture; and was a bright red color highly esteemed by the ancients. It was sought after, and worn by princes, and occasionally by the rich. It is mentioned to the honor of Saul that he clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet. 2 Sam. i. 24. The idea of dignity associated with this color, is still preserved in some parts of the East. In Persia, for instance, a scarlet outer coat or mantle is the distinction of a khan or noble. But we need not go to the East for illustration, as there is no people in the world who attach such pre-eminence to this color as we do. Besides being the military color with us, the robes of our peers, of the chiefs of the law, of doctors in all the faculties, and of the principal civic functionaries—mayors and aldermen—are all of this hue. It is worthy of note, however, that the color was not exactly of the same hue with our present "scarlet," which, moreover, is not the color our translators had in view in their use of the term. It was rather a deep red or vermilion, approaching to a bright rich crimson. Accordingly,

sacred poesy identifies it with the hue of a woman's lips:—"Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet"—(Sol. Song iv. 3); and this was the color intended by our translators, for the present "scarlet" was not known in their time.

The "scarlet" intended in Scripture was obtained from the female or grub of an insect (*cocus ilicis*) of the same family as the cochineal (*cocus cactus*), by which it has now been superseded for European use, although still employed in Persia and India. It attains the size and form of a pea, is of a violet black color, covered with a whitish powder, adhering to plants, chiefly various species of oak, and so clearly resembling grains or berries, that its insect nature was not known for many centuries. All the ancients concur in describing the dye as obtained from a sort of small berries which were gathered from the holm oak. They not only call them berries, but speak of them as the product of the oak itself. The tree is common in the Levant, and is also found in Spain. In Palestine it is chiefly found in the *Quercus coccifera*, or *kermes* oak. It was not until the middle ages that the insect character of this product became known, and then the color acquired the name of *vermiculata*, a term preserved essentially in our *vermilion*.

The word translated "crimson" in this verse, is but another word for this same "scarlet;" it being a usage of Hebrew poetry to give intensity of expression by repeating the same idea, with slight variation of phrase. If we had two words for the same color, the effect of the original would have been best preserved by employing them—but as that is not the case, and the repetition of the same word in both clauses would have been awkward, it would, perhaps, have been better to use the more nearly allied terms, "scarlet" and "vermilion," than

"scarlet" and "crimson." A recent commentator* is altogether wrong in saying that the "crimson" of this text is the same word usually rendered "blue." For blue there is a very different word in the Hebrew. But he is right in his observation, that the scarlet was regarded as the most *fast* or *fixed* of colors: "Neither dew, nor rain, nor washing, nor long usage, could remove it." Hence it is used to represent the *fixity* or *permanency* of sins in the heart. No human means will wash them out. No effort of man, no external rite, no tears, nor sacrifices, nor prayers, are of themselves sufficient to take them away. They are deeply fixed in the heart, as the scarlet color was in the web of cloth, and an almighty power is needful to remove them. The prophet means to say, that although they are thus fixed, and immovable by any human means, yet that the mercy of God can take away all the stains.

FOURTEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

DRESS AND ORNAMENT OF WOMEN.—ISAIAH III. 16–24.

The third chapter of Isaiah contains a remarkable enumeration of the articles which composed the dress of a Hebrew lady of fashion in the time of the prophet. One would think that this ought to enable us to form a distinct conception of the garb in which women of quality appeared; and this would be valuable in many respects, as enabling us to form an idea to the mind of the aspect which raiment gave to those of whom we read so much. It might even be supposed that a clever artist might find no difficulty in combining such minute particulars into a pictorial representation of a female Israelite in all her dress and ornaments. This has, however, never been done, though we dare say it has often been attempted. The fact is, there are two serious difficulties in the task. One is, the uncertainty which interpreters feel, in the absence of the material facts, as to the meaning of the terms employed; and

* Barnes' *Notes on Isaiah.*

the other, the want of pictured representations of this dress, from monuments, or the dress of any near or kindred nation, which might help to the identification of the particulars. It is true, there are abundant Egyptian representations of female attire; but we are to remember that the climate of Egypt was very different from that of Palestine, and required a different and lighter raiment; and, in fact, we see that the dress of the Egyptians was most essentially different from that of the various Syrian nations represented, chiefly as prisoners, on the monuments of Egypt.

Then, it may be asked, why not recur to these latter representations for the required materials? The answer is, that the representations are almost entirely of male foreigners, and that we are therefore left without any information from this source as to the prevailing style of garb among the women of the Syrian nations.

The case is, however, not hopeless. There are the Arabians,—a neighboring people of kindred origin, who have remained in the same country, with little alteration of language, habits of life, or raiment, since the days of the patriarchs; and it is probable we should not be far wrong in seeking among them for all the proximate illustrations of Hebrew costume we can require, or may now hope to obtain.

It is common to confound the terms Arabian and Bedouin; but all the Arabians are not tent-dwellers. They have had, and even still have, important towns, the inhabitants of which pursue the avocations and maintain the habits of civil life, manifesting, even now, among the wealthier classes, much luxury of dress and ornament, especially among the women. The dress of the poorer inhabitants of these towns is much the same with that of the Arabians, who dwell in tents; and it has always appeared to us, that from the dresses worn by these different classes of the great Arabian people, nothing that occurs in Scripture on the subject of costume needs remain unexplained. Even at this day, the Arabian influence as to costume predominate in Syria, and the paramount style of raiment differs little from that of the Arabs. As we go farther

north, the Turkish dress begins to prevail. This dress, it will be recollected, is quite different from, and in all respects far less becoming than, the Arabian. It is also an exotic importation that came in with the Turks, and was not known in western Asia until a *comparatively* recent period, and therefore supplying no materials for illustration. Indeed, one would not desire to regard Scripture characters as arrayed in such a garb as that of the Turks, which, with its vast trowsers and small, skirtless jackets, always seemed to us singularly ungraceful as compared with the flowing amplitude of Arabian attire. It has been praised, indeed, by Europeans; but only, we apprehend, in comparison with their own still more atrocious costumes, and sometimes, as we know, from their regarding the Arabian costumes as Turkish, from observing them in Turkish towns. Even in Constantinople, the Arabian dress prevails among certain classes of the population, such as those who follow what with us would be called the learned professions. The proper Turkish dress is, in fact, an equestrian one, and the Turks were formerly an entirely equestrian people, as they still are in part; but it is ill suited to the civil life to which they attained after the conquest of the Greek empire.

Under these views, we shall feel authorized in looking mainly to Arabian dress for the analogies which may, from the text before us, furnish us with some clearer apprehensions than are usually entertained respecting the raiment of the Jewish females. We may premise, however, that although we conceive the dress of the Hebrew women (and also, indeed, of the men) to have been essentially different from that of the ancient Egyptians, it is very possible that many articles of personal *ornament* were much the same in form and application. The large class of articles we include under the name of "jewellery," are less different in neighboring countries than the articles that constitute the proper "dress," perhaps because they are not subject to the influence of those changes which variations of climate necessitate. A necklace, a bracelet, an ear-ring, a frontlet of diamonds, silver, or gold, are as well suited to a warm as to a cold climate.

FOURTEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

TINKLING ORNAMENTS AND MUFFLERS.—ISAIAH III. 18–20.

THE "tinkling ornaments about their feet," with which the prophet begins his enumeration of the Hebrew ladies' attire and ornaments, will, in the absence of other materials, call to the minds of many readers that ancient lady of nursery rhyme, who had

> "Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
> That she may have music wherever she goes."

In fact, among the anklets worn by the dancing girls of India, there is one sort which has a row of small bells attached to it, for the purpose of producing a "tinkling" corresponding to the movements of the dance. We doubt, however, that anything of this kind is intended here; and rather suppose that the *jingling* of the anklets still ordinarily worn by the women among the Syro-Arabian nations, is what the prophet has in view. Anklets of solid gold or silver are worn by some ladies. These are of course very heavy, and knocking together as the wearer walks, make a ringing noise. Hence it is said in an

Arabian love song, "The ringing of thy anklets hath deprived me of reason." It is probably to this the text has reference. This ornament is much affected by women of all classes. We have seen them worn by the wives of the richer peasants, and

the sheiks of villages, and even by servants, and by the women who distribute milk and butter (or, as we should call them, "milkmaids") to the houses in towns. Small anklets of iron are worn by many children. It was, however, formerly a custom among the Arabs for girls to wear a string of bells on their feet; and little girls may still sometimes be seen with small bells attached to their anklets. The anklets in ordinary use are often not solid, but hollow; and this of course much enhances the sharp ringing sound which they produce when struck together, as, from the enlarged diameter, often happens in walking. In fact, the women thus adorned affect so to walk as that their anklets shall come into collision at each step they take; and this seems to have been the case among the Jewish women, for the prophet clearly describes them as "mincing their steps as they go," in order to make this "tinkling with their feet." This seems to supply a sufficient explanation. But some interpreters assert that the Hebrew ladies of fashion wore bells to the hem of their garments. We know from sculptures that such appendages were used by the ancient Bacchantes for the sake of the sound they afforded when the wearer moved actively in the dance; and that the idea of this usage was not unknown to the Israelites, appears from the fact, that small bells were attached to the hem of the high-priest's robe.

But what are the "cauls" which are next presented to our notice? This is more than can be said with distinctness. Mr. Jenour translates the term by "worked sandals," for the reason that, as the prophet is speaking of the ornaments of the feet and legs, "it is but reasonable to suppose he would observe some kind of order." It does not appear, however, that the prophet does observe *this* kind of order; and what is "reasonable to suppose," is not sufficient authority for an interpretation which the original does not sanction. We know very well what the Hebrew word for sandals is, and there is no trace of it here. The marginal reading is "network;" and several learned interpreters collect from the Arabic language that the word employed denotes certain points and studs, used to ornament the hair. If this be the case, we can be at no loss about it, for we find the

same thing in use at this day among the Arabian women. They divide their hair into a number of braids, which fall down the back, and to each of which are attached three silken threads, charged with small ornaments of gold, and terminating with small coins of the same metal. The whole of this piece of work presents a rich appearance, and at some little distance, has a sort of mailed or reticulated aspect, which might very well suggest "network" as a suitably descriptive term, if the original word is to be so understood. Indeed, the idea of "interweaving," on which this interpretation is founded, is fully exemplified in this sort of ornament, since the silken threads are, for a third of their length, generally interwoven with their hair. It is called *safa*, and Mr. Lane says of it: "The safa appears to me the prettiest,

as well as the most singular, of all the ornaments worn by the ladies of Egypt. The glittering of the bark,* etc., and their chinking together as the wearer walks, have a peculiarly lively

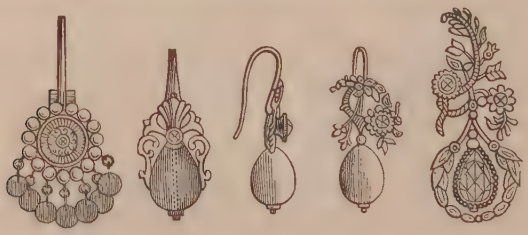
effect." This last circumstance seems to furnish a strong corroboration of the opinion we have hazarded; for, as being chinking ornaments of the hair, we might expect them to be mentioned immediately after, and in connection with, the "tinkling ornaments about the feet."

In regard to "the round tires like the moon," it is usually

*The name of the little ornaments taken separately.

suggested that the ornaments in question were small moon-like figures, strung together, and worn as a necklace. It is, however, possible that the comparison to the moon is only employed —according to existing Eastern usage—to denote the lustre of the ornament rather than its form. In this view the Arabians give the name of moon (*kamarah*) to the splendid ornament (moon-like only from its brilliancy), generally of gold, and sometimes set with jewels, which is worn in front of the female head-

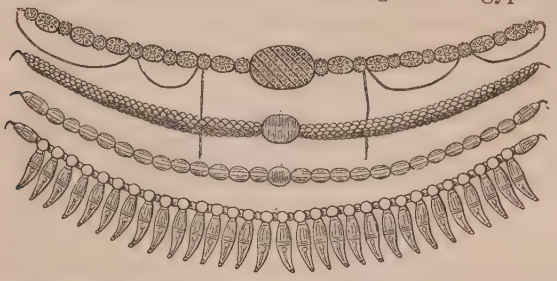
dress. Another ornament applied to the same purpose might suggest a comparison to the moon by its roundness; and, indeed, jewelled crescents are also among the ornaments worn in the head-dress of females. Thus, upon the whole, there seems little reason to doubt the use of the ornaments in question, whatever may have been their particular shape.



The "chains" that come next are literally "drops," or "pendants," and probably comprehend all kinds of pendant ornaments, including ear-rings, necklaces, and the like. Ear-rings, as worn by *men*, we have had some former occasion of noticing.*

* Morning Series: Eleventh Week—Monday.

Although, as then remarked, ear-rings are never now used by men in the countries named in Scripture, they are there still favorite ornaments with the women; and they are sometimes of tasteful form, though usually, like all Oriental jewelry, of somewhat rough workmanship. Of necklaces we are now enabled to present the reader with existing Arabo-Egyptian ex-



amples, which appear to be very similar to those used by the ancient Egyptian ladies, as figured on the monuments. The first is of diamonds, set in gold; the second consists of several strings of pearls, with an emerald in the centre; the third is composed of hollow beads, with a bead of a different kind in the centre; the fourth is of hollow gold, and is called *sha'eer* (barley) from its shape.

"Bracelets," which next follow, have already received ar consideration;* but to the ancient examples there given, we

now add specimens of those at present in common use among the women of Arabia and Syria; and we may add, that those

* Morning Series: Thirty-fifth Week—Friday.

represented, in the Assyrian sculptures, as worn by great personages, are remarkably rich and elegant, being composed of a jointed plate charged with large rosettes (probably jewelled) nearly touching one another.

By the term rendered "mufflers," a kind of veil is doubtless denoted. Various kinds of veils seem, indeed, to be mentioned in this description of a woman's dress, and for the most part, such as we still find in the East. The one here denoted appears to have been a veil for the face, which, in this age, seems to have been affected by the ladies of the higher classes, although probably disregarded by the general body of the female population. At present the use of the veil for the face, out of doors, is common. This in Syria and Egypt is usually a long strip —black or white, plain or ornamented—fastened around the head, and descending nearly to the feet. We suppose this to be the one intended here. It does not cover the eyes; and the lower part being loose, has a sort of *tremulous* motion, to which there seems to be an allusion in the original Hebrew word.

We need not inform our lady readers that the "bonnets," which come next before us, must be materially different from those articles of the same name which have a special interest to themselves. The head-dress, or turban, in a general sense, appears to be intended. This, apart from the golden or jewelled ornament with which it may be adorned, usually, at the present day, consists of a cap, around which is wound one or more rich hankerchiefs or shawls, folded high and flat, and not bulging out like those of the men.* This is the general plan of the female head-dress, but there are great variations in the details.

* See Illustration, p. 39.

What "the ornaments of the legs" may be, we do not know; but a great authority* renders the term by "step-chains," and refers to the analogous term in Arabic, where it denotes the short chains, which Oriental females wore attached to the ankle-band of each foot, so as to compel them to take short and mincing steps.

The word translated "head-bands," seems rather, from a comparison of texts, to denote "girdles," especially as worn by a bride. In the East, women, as well as men, wear girdles; but they are in general less bulky, and less elaborately folded around the person, being commonly a shawl, sometimes of great value, loosely folded, fastened in front, and suffered to hang down behind a little. This may be seen in one of our engravings.†

But what shall we say to the "tablets," expressed in the original by a term which literally interpreted, means, as some say "houses of the soul," but more properly, "of breath." The word rendered "breath," means also the scent or odor which anything breathes forth or exhales,—so that the odor of the rose would be the *breath* of the rose. Thus we come easily to the signification, that these articles called "houses," that is, abodes or receptacles "of scent," were small caskets, or bags, or bottles of perfume, equivalent to smelling-bottles, which, judging from analogy, were attached to a necklace that hung down to the waist. The Orientals are partial to perfumes, and ladies commonly carry them in this way upon their persons.

Fifteenth Week—Sunday.

REBELLIOUS CHILDREN.—ISAIAH I. 2, 3.

THE relation in which the Lord delights to exhibit himself to his people is that of a father to his children; and when they are disobedient and rebellious, He impresses upon us the enor-

* GESEN'US. † See p. 48

mity of their conduct, by reminding us of the sternest of life's sorrows—a father's grief at the unworthiness of his son. "I have nourished and brought up children," He says, "and they have rebelled against Me." He had not only *nourished* them—that is, *nursed* * their infant and helpless years—but had watched over and sustained their growth—had "brought them up" to the strength and glory of manhood, and then—they rebelled against Him. There is a deep pathos in the suggestion here presented to the mind, of the solemn grief of a father over a rebellious and worthless son, on the one hand; and of the intensity of the son's ingratitude in rebelling against the paternal hand, on the other. This appears with force even to us; but with much greater force must it have struck the minds of the Israelites, whose notions of filial reverence and duty were of a much stronger cast, like those of all Orientals, than we find prevalent among ourselves. We cannot measure the difference, nor do we know to what cause in national character, or in social or political institutions, it should be ascribed; but certain it is, that in this country and America—which, more than any other nations, enjoy the freest access to those Sacred Scriptures which set forth "Honor thy father and thy mother," as "the first commandment with promise"—paternal authority is more feeble, and filial attachment and respect are less strongly manifested, than in any other country under heaven. Hence the force of such an allusion as this, which was intuitively apprehended in its fullest force by an Israelite, is, although comprehensible to the understanding, hardly *felt* in all its depth among ourselves, until a pause has been given to the consideration of the true character of the relation between a father and his child.

Then let us consider it—in order to realize that comprehension which the sluggish heart too often refuses, without the help of the reason, to furnish.

It is not, perhaps, until one becomes a parent himself, that

* This is the sense of the word, now obsolete, but current when the authorized version was made. Thus, "nourice" was nurse. So Spenser calls Camden "the nourice of antiquity."

he can thoroughly understand how much he owes to the care and love of his parents, during that earliest stage of his existence of which he retains no actual knowledge, although it leaves its mark upon him, in the habit of loving dependence, which is even then implanted. Then, although the father hangs with thankful fondness over the child that God has given to him and treads the paths of life with a more elastic step in the consciousness of being a father, it is the mother's love and care that reign paramount, as the young one nestles to her bosom, and draws its life from her; and as she, from day to day and hour to hour, untiringly watches its every look and movement, hastens to appease its little griefs, responds to its small tokens of infantine joy, and admires, as only mothers can, the signs of opening intelligence. The relation between these two, as we behold them, is not only beautiful in its lighter aspects, but sublime in its depths; for of all the "tender and delicate women" who thus hover blessingly over the early days of their children, there is not one in a thousand who would for a moment hesitate to confront the most savage perils, or to lay down her very life, for its sake.

Next think of the father's less intimately tender care *then*, but then and after not less deep and earnest love towards his children. How fervently he prays for, and watches over, their welfare, and with what earnest solicitude he regards their well-being in soul and body, and marks their growth in strength, in knowledge, in piety, and intellect! For them he labors, for them he strives, for them denies himself; and that it is for them, makes his daily toil, his constant struggle, and all his self-denial, sweet. Oh, the cares, the anxious thoughts, the perplexing fears, which he has continually for their welfare in this life and in the life to come!

In view of all this, it seems like a moral impossibility that all this care and love should ever be returned with such stubbornness, disregard, rebellion, scorn, and wrong-doing, as must pierce the paternal heart sharper than any sword. It seems the greatest of enormities of which our fallen nature is capable; and therefore it is that the Lord brings it forward as the most

forcible illustration of his people's disregard of Him and rebellion against Him. "I have nourished and brought up children —and they have rebelled against Me."

There are things worse than death, and this is one of them In this conviction we were much impressed lately by a passage in the Memoir of the Rev. James Hay, D. D.* Speaking of the state of mind to which he was reduced by the loss of many of his children in rapid succession, he says: "While still in this state of mind, a pious lady of my acquaintance called upon me, who had buried her husband and three sons. In the course of conversation, she remarked with many tears, that it was much easier to mourn over the dead than over the living; and then told me that her eldest surviving son, instead of being a comfort to her, and an example to the younger members of his family, was causing her much grief and anguish of mind—that he had gone far, very far, astray, and was resisting all her entreaties to be reclaimed. I felt upbraided by these acknowledgments, and saw that I had sinned by allowing myself to fall into the state of mind in which I then was. I mentioned this circumstance to my wife, and showed her what a lesson of resignation this lady had taught us."

Not less to us than to the Israelites has the Lord been a father; and not less heinous in us than in them is the sin of filial ingratitude and rebellion against Him. Has he not from the beginning watched over us with a parent's care? Did He not conduct us safely through all the perils of the wilderness, and feed us from day to day with bread from heaven and water from the rock? Has he not all our life defended us from our enemies on every side? Has he not paternally instructed us by his servants, by his statutes and judgments, and by his good Spirit? And if from time to time He has chastened, has it not been as a father chasteneth his son—loving him most when he smites him hardest? Let us believe that if we be born of God, we are indeed his children; and let us not rebel in heart or

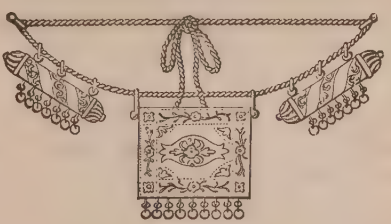
**Sermons and Sacramental Addresses*, by the Rev. James Hay, D. D. With a Memoir of the Author, by the Rev. William Mackelvie, D. D Edinburgh: Oliphant & Sons. 1851.

hand against Him who hath nourished and brought us up, but strive day by day to grow up in all things to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

FIFTEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

VEILS AND WRAPPERS.—ISAIAH III. 20–23.

In resuming the consideration of the curious particulars furnished in the third chapter of Isaiah, respecting the dress and ornaments of the Hebrew ladies, we come next to what our translators have rendered "ear-rings," but which is now generally allowed to be nothing of the kind, but rather small caskets containing charms or amulets. To the use of such things among the Orientals, we had occasion to refer not more than two days ago. Those to which the text refers, probably contained (unless the women were idolaters) texts of Scriptures, just as the Moslems employ passages from the Koran for the same purpose. Those worn by women are made to serve as ornaments, by being enclosed in small cases of chased gold or silver, and are commonly worn at the right side, being suspended from a silken cord, or a chain passed over the left shoulder. They are sometimes worn at the neck or bosom, or



around the head, and frequently two or more are attached to the same string. That the Hebrews were greatly addicted to the like superstition, is allowed by their own writers.

The "rings" require no explanation, except to remark the curious fact that no finger-rings appear in any of the Assyrian

sculptures that have yet been found, though rings appear *upon the great toes*, of some kings and other high personages; and the "nose-jewels" have already been explained.* What "the changeable suits of apparel" (one word in the original) denotes, we can collect from Zech. iii. 3, 4, where the same word describes rich and costly garments, worn only on special occasions, as contrasted with the humbler garb employed for ordinary wear. The idea of their being *changed* or *changeable*, probably

refers to the practice of taking them off or changing them, to prevent them from being tarnished, when the occasions for their use had passed. If the term refers to any single article of dress, it is probably the gown. Those among ladies of quality are often very costly indeed, being of rich figured silks and satins, and were anciently, doubtless, of the richest stuffs that could be procured. The term has suggested "shot silk" to some; but there is no evidence that silk was anciently used

* Morning Series: Ninth Week—Friday.

in Western Asia; for it is not agreed that the word translated "silk" in Prov. xxxi. 22, has really that meaning.

The women having comparatively little under-clothing, frequently wore, in-doors, over the gown, a long pelisse or mantle, made of cloth, silk, or velvet; and some such article as this, we

suppose, to be the "mantle" which the prophet names among the articles of female attire.

What our translators meant to indicate by the now obsolete word "wimples," is probably as unintelligible to most readers

as would be the original Hebrew term. A wimple was a sort of hood, which fitted to the head, and came down behind, to

near the small of the back, covering also the shoulders The descending part of this hood distinguished it as a wimple. Thus, Spenser describes his Una as shading her beauty

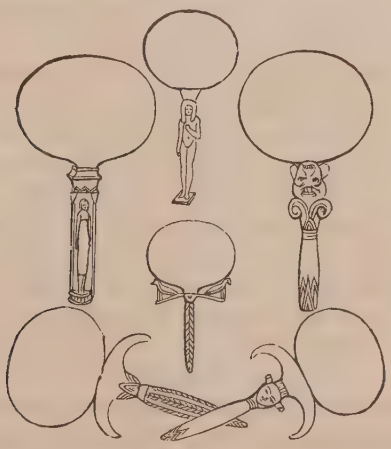
"Under a veil that wimpled was full low."

Such wimples, or descending hoods, are still worn by nuns, and form the ordinary out-door dress (in lieu of bonnet and shawl) in the south of Italy and Malta, and are generally of black silk. Something of the kind is worn, in place of a more ample envelope, by the Arabian peasant females. We do not however, think that this kind of article correctly represents the original, which appears rather to indicate the ample enveloping robe in which the Easterns shroud their persons when they go abroad. It is much like, and nearly as capacious as a sheet. It is white, black, striped, or plaided,—different colors and patterns prevailing in different localities; and they are of costly or cheap material—silk or cotton—according to the circumstances of the wearer. Being thrown over the head, and

fastened thereto by a ribbon secured inside, this mantle falls to the ground, and, with the face veil, completely envelops the whole person. The word here is, in fact, the same in the original as that which denotes "the veil" in which Ruth took away six measures of barley from the threshing-floor of Boaz.

Under this outer wrapper ladies often wore a capacious silk robe (called *tob*) with long and loose sleeves, which, in coarser materials, often serves the females of lower rank for an external walking garment.

"Crisping-pins," to which we next come, is a strange translation of the same word which is rendered "bag" in 2 Kings v. 23. A purse seems to be intended in both places. By this, we are to understand a richly ornamented purse or small bag, which the women wore attached to the girdle, to serve them for a pocket. They are usually made of silk, wrought with threads of silver and gold. Some say, that those of the Hebrew women were of metal, sometimes of pure gold, and fashioned like a cone, with borders of rich cloth at the top; but we know not on what authority this statement rests.



The "glasses" were not "looking-glasses," as some would suppose. They were, however, small mirrors, but made of highly polished metal, which the women employed at the

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toilet, and sometimes wore as articles of ornament and use. This custom is very ancient indeed, for we read in Exodus xxxviii. 8, that in the wilderness the women gave their mirrors to form the brass plates for the external covering of the great altar. It is known that the ancient Egyptians used mirrors of this sort, and actual specimens, as well as representations of them, have been found. Bishop Lowth, and some others, however, think that not mirrors but transparent garments are meant. That such dresses existed, is shown by the fact that in the Egyptian paintings women are often seen arrayed in dresses through which the outline of the person is distinctly visible, and which, therefore, of whatever material composed, must have been as transparent as the finest muslin, we had almost said as crape.

The "fine linen" is, in the original, the same word which is translated "sheets" in Judges xiv. 12, 13, and which, there as here, we take to mean the innermost article of dress, shirts or shifts, which were probably made of what was then considered fine linen. Indeed, our translators have put "shirts" in the margin of the text just indicated. Dr. Henderson sanctions this view by translating here by "linen shifts." It is likely that the wearing of this garment at all was a distinction of persons in good circumstances, and that, as is now often the case, the poorer classes were content, for constant wear, with a woollen robe in winter, and one of coarse linen in summer.

Next we come to "hoods," which have somewhat perplexed interpreters. Many translate the word by "turbans;" but they also render the "bonnets" of verse 20, by "tires," and allow them to be head-dresses, and head-dresses are turbans; so this makes us have the same thing twice over, which is more than we want. Some who attempt to provide for it, confound in a strange manner the different articles of Arabian attire of which they have read, but with which they possess no practical acquaintance. We venture to suggest, that the term may denote a species of head-dress which is still seen among the Arabian nations. It consists of a large handkerchief or shawl, or piece of linen or cotton (usually black or of

some dark color, but white in some localities,) which is wound round the head, and falls over the neck and shoulders, the ends or corners being brought round in front to cover the throat and bosom, and generally the lower part of the face to the tip of the nose—being, in fact, the ordinary veil of the class of women by whom it is used—such, chiefly, as are engaged in active employments, to which this offers less impediment than any other kind of veil. It is, perhaps, taken as a whole, what our translators must have had in view by the "wimple" of a previous verse.

The "veils" which we next reach seem to be the only remaining veil which has not been noticed. This is a kind of head veil which ladies wear at home, and which, not being intended for concealment of the features, rests upon the head and falls down over the back. It is of very light texture, being usually a long strip of muslin, embroidered with threads of colored silk and gold, forming altogether one of the most graceful articles in the female attire of the East. A black veil

of this sort becomes an external article of dress when the *tob*, already mentioned, is used as an outer robe.

The phrase in verse 24, "Instead of a girdle, a rent," is scarcely correct. It means, that instead of such elegant shawl girdles as women of quality wore, there shall be a common

girdle of cord or twisted wool, such as was in use among the poor countrywomen.

The "well set hair" of the same verse reminds us how elaborately the hair was anciently braided among the Egyptian ladies, as shown by the figures on the monuments, and such was doubtless the case among the women of Syria and Palestine, of whom we possess no corresponding representations. The figures which we give here illustrate some of the other details in these papers, especially as regards the ornaments of the head, the neck, and the arms.

FIFTEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

BUTTER AND HONEY.—ISAIAH VII. 15-25.

We formerly had occasion to refer to the wonderful prediction of Isaiah, respecting the child to be born, which was given as a sign to Ahaz.* We therefore only refer to the repetition of the circumstance in the book of Isaiah's prophecies, for the sake of calling attention to one or two of the particulars which it did not then lie in our way to notice.

It is said of the child,—"Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good,"—or rather, "until he knows,"—that is, that he shall be so fed until the first few years of his life have passed. In regard to this

* Morning Series: Fifty-first Week—Sunday.

eating of butter and honey, various singular explanations have been given by commentators, which would have been spared us, had they possessed some knowledge of Eastern habits of life. It must be understood that the word translated "butter," not only denotes that which is properly butter, in our acceptation of the word, but sundry preparations from milk less than butter; such as cream, butter-milk, and sour curdled milk, all of which are largely used in Western Asia, especially in juvenile dietary. Even the butter proper is a different thing from ours, being white as lard, and very deficient of the flavor which we consider essential to good butter. Indeed, there are differences in this respect among ourselves; as, for instance, in Devonshire butter is not, as elsewhere, made from the skim of cold milk, but from the thick deposit (known as clotted cream) formed upon the surface of scalded milk, and is finally turned into "butter," without the aid of the "churn," employed in other parts of the country. The results of this further process, however conducted here and elsewhere, are all butter, whatever be the differences in the appearance and quality of the product. It is quite possible that in this and some other places where the word is translated "butter," milk in even its simple state may be understood. Certainly milk, and such preparations of it as we have indicated, are consumed very largely, and, together with honey when it can be procured, form the staple diet of young children. It is surprising that some understand this diet as denoting a time of distress, seeing that no products of agriculture—no bread, is mentioned. It is surely forgotten that the plenty of the land of Canaan is continually described by its being "a land flowing with milk and honey." The feeding of children with milk and honey, is also mentioned by heathen writers to express their prosperous bringing up. Indeed, in the 22d verse of this very chapter, it seems that this "butter and honey" was, by reason of abundance, to enter more largely even than usual into the ordinary food of the people; and from the verse that precedes, it appears that not only the milk of kine, but of sheep (and elsewhere, Prov. xxvii. 27, of goats also) was employed, as among the Bedouins at

this day. This diet is described by Irby and Mangles as forming the concluding mess of a feast with which they were entertained by an Arab Sheikh:—"They afterwards gave us some honey and butter, together with bread to dip in it, Narsuk (the sheikh) desiring one of his men to mix it for us, as we were rather awkward at it. The Arab having stirred the mixture up well with his fingers, showed his dexterity at consuming as well as mixing, and rewarded himself for his trouble by eating half of it." In fact, cream or fresh butter mixed with honey, is much used at breakfast in those parts, especially among the Arabs; and when it is intended to provide an elegant repast, the bread-paste is kneaded up afresh, along with butter and honey. Children, especially, seem everywhere to have a taste for this sort of combination of butter and sweets. We count it among the reminiscences of our own childhood, that although we for ourselves preferred the butter "pure and simple"—treacle laid over bread already buttered, or sugar sprinkled over it, was regarded as a special luxury by most of our juvenile contemporaries. We are obliged to a friend in Scotland for an equally practical, and still more literal, illustration of this Oriental combination of honey with butter. He says: "In my father's family, for many years, we every autumn received from the country a large supply of fresh (unsalted) butter, and honey. The former was dissolved in a sauce-pan, and then well mixed with the honey, after which the whole was poured into ars, where it was preserved in excellent condition for many months, and formed a favorite condiment to us youngsters."

Before it should come to pass that the child spoken of by the prophet should be old enough "to refuse the evil and choose the good," the confederacy then subsisting between the kingdoms of Israel and Syria, to the alarm and detriment of Judah, should be brought to naught through the invasion and subjugation of these lands by the Assyrians. This is expressed in the remarkable words: "I will hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria." The army is here compared to swarms of these insects with reference to their immense number, and

to the pungency of their stings. To hiss for them, is to call or summon them, derived from the practice of the bee-keepers, who, with a whistle, summoned them from the hives to the open fields, and by the same means conducted them home again. We know not that the practice still exists. Most likely it does, though it has not been noticed; but we are assured by St. Cyril, that it still subsisted in Asia down to the fourth and fifth centuries.

Further on we are told that the invaders should come with "arrows and with bows;" and these weapons are constantly ascribed to the Assyrians—more, indeed, to them than to any other of the invaders of Israel or Judah—with what fitness the sculptures of Nineveh now enable us to ascertain, as there will be soon another occasion to show. On this fact, an ingenious writer* of the last century, now difficult of access, founded a conjecture as to the reason of the bee being made the emblem of the Assyrians. It was probably, he thinks, on account of the resemblance between a quiver full of arrows and the forked sting in the tail of the bee; "and if," he adds, in these early times, the archers in their flight shot arrows backwards, as the

Persians and Parthians did afterwards, the resemblance would be still more characteristic of the archer in the Assyrian army; whether native Assyrians or Median and Persian allies." He

* Rev. Thomas Howes, in his *Observations on Books*, published occasionally, in parts, at intervals of years, so that a complete set is rarely to be found. The volumes (four) are rich in chronological materials and suggestions.

goes on to urge, that the choice of this emblem becomes a strong proof that the circumstance of archery was noticed as "a *distinguishing* property in that army." All these happy conjectures are confirmed by the sculptures, in which we not only find the arrow the distinguishing weapon of the Assyrians, but have instances of men turning round in their flight to discharge arrows at the pursuing enemy. It will be observed, that the

analogy indicated by Howes is not merely between an arrow to the sting of a bee, but of a quiver of arrows to a bee's sting. The ingenuity and fitness will be obvious to those acquainted with the structure of that sting, which was probably known to him, and which may be made intelligible by the annexed enlarged representation of it.

Considering the great abundance of bees in Assyria, and the excellence of its honey, it is far from unlikely that the bee may have been a known symbol of the Assyrian power. We have not been able to discover any evidence of this among the sculptures hitherto brought to light; but we find a modern and sufficiently appropriate instance, in the adoption of the bee as the symbol of the French empire by Napoleon. Considering his early-entertained and long-cherished dreams of eastern conquest, it has been supposed by some that he had this text in view in the adoption of that emblem. It is better ascertained, however, that he wished the bee to be regarded as indicating the revival of the Merovingian dynasty, of which this insect seems to have been the symbol;* and as represent-

* In the year 1654 a tomb was discovered at Tournay (in Flanders), which was supposed to be that of Childeric I., son of Merovée (head of the Merovingian dynasty.) and father of Clovis, who reigned in the Low Countries from 458 to 481. This tomb contained a sword with a golden hilt, an iron hatchet, *many bees of gold*, 100 gold medals of the emperors of Constantinople contemporary with Childeric, with 200 silver medals of the same empire prior to Childeric. The Emperor Leopold presented these remains to Louis XIV., and they are still preserved in the Cabinet of Antiquities of the National Library at Paris.

ing the industry of the nation. The *spread bee* also is not unlike the national fleur-de-lis, and it seems Napoleon was not unwilling that it should be mistaken for such by the populace.

FIFTEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

RABSHAKEH'S ORATION—ISAIAH XXXVI. XXXVII.

In the chapters which relate to the Assyrian invasion of Judah under Sennacherib, there are many particulars which receive new and interesting illustration from the recent discoveries of Layard and Botta in Assyrian antiquities. These, indeed, refer chiefly to the *public* life of the Assyrians; and do not furnish those details of all the social and private life of the people which the painted tombs of Egypt present to us. But it is chiefly in this their public life and warlike operations that the Scripture brings the Assyrians before us; and the sculptures which have been brought to light, do therefore furnish respecting this remarkable ancient people, exactly the kind of information which was most to be desired; and it is to be hoped that further discoveries may supply information respecting much that yet remains obscure or doubtful.

The chapters to which we have come, treat, nearly in the same words, of that invasion of the land of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, which is recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Second Book of Kings. The historical incidents have already occupied our attention in considering that portion of Scripture; and we are now left more at liberty to point out the indications of Assyrian usages which the present narrative of the same transaction offers. We shall, of course, take them in the order in which they occur; and in our way through the Prophets, all those which the Scriptures appear to furnish must pass under our notice.

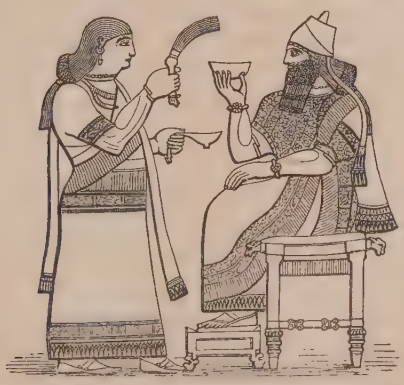
What first comes under consideration is the insolent message delivered before the walls of Jerusalem by Rabshakeh, in the name of his master the king of Assyria. He first derides the

Hebrews for trusting for help to the king of Egypt: "Lo, thou trustest on the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it." This comparison would only be likely to occur to persons in the habit of using walking-staves. As it happens, this was equally true both of the Assyrians and the Egyptians, and was therefore the more appropriate; and in both the staves used in walking were taller than is usual with us—generally as tall as the shoulder; and it is evident from the Egyptian specimens that men, when standing still, threw much of the weight of their bodies upon their staves—or, in other words, were apt to lean forcibly upon them, so that from this, as well as from their length, the accident of their breaking, unless of good quality, could not fail to be of frequent occurrence, which, from both circumstances, would more frequently be attended with injury than might at first be supposed. It is also observable

that the Egyptian walking-staff has usually a slim, rod-like appearance, whereas the Assyrian one is commonly a stout and substantial stick; so that the former would be much more

liable to break than the latter. It is therefore likely that the known frequency of this accident among the Egyptians gave much sarcastic point to the similitude which Rabshakeh, leaning upon his own strong staff the while, denounced Judah's trust in the Egyptian king. It is well to add that the walking-cane appears far more frequently in the Egyptian than in the Assyrian monuments. This is doubtless because the latter refer chiefly to warlike proceedings, in which the personages find sufficient occupation for their hands in the managemen. of their weapons and their reins. It appears, however, as among the Egyptians in social life. The king uses it when he takes his walks abroad, which may remind us moreover that staves were anciently the sceptres of kings, though all staves were not sceptres. Indeed, in Hebrew there is but one word for a staff and a sceptre.

Of this Rabshakeh himself, it has already been remarked, that this is not a name but a title of office, that of "chief cup-bearer;" and it has been shown that this was a high office in the East, so that there is nothing extraordinary in persons holding it appearing as generals, ambassadors, or governors. In one of the sculptures from Nimrud, recently arrived at the



British Museum, a cup-bearer is represented in the discharge of his proper office. The king is seated on his throne, which is an ornamented and elevated chair without any back, and

has just taken the broad saucer-like wine-cup from the salver, and holds it not as we should do, but sustains it upon the points of his fingers, after a fashion still usual in the same region. Before him stands the cup-bearer, holding in his right hand a fly-flapper, and in the other the salver on which he has presented the wine-cup, which is furnished with a curious handle terminating in bird's heads. The physiognomy and beardless face of the cup-bearer, indicate that he was an eunuch. There is little doubt that Rabshakeh was also of that class. In fact one of the principal offices of the Assyrian is expressly designated by his official title of "Rabsaris," or "chief of the eunuchs." Indeed the monuments show the personal attendants of the king to have been chiefly eunuchs; and that those persons rose to the highest rank, and were not merely servants, is shown from the Scripture instances, remarkably corroborated by the sculptures, in which, says Layard, "eunuchs are represented as commanding in war; fighting both in chariots and on horseback; and receiving the prisoners and the heads of the slain after battle. They were also employed as scribes, and are seen writing down the number of the heads and the amount of the spoil obtained from the enemy. They were even accustomed to officiate in religious ceremonies. They appear, indeed, to have occupied the more important posts, and to have exercised the same influence in the Assyrian court as they have since done in the East, where they have not only filled the highest offices of state, but have even attained to sovereign power."

In the Thirty-second Volume of the *Archæologia* of the Society of Antiquaries, there is a memoir by Mr. Birch of the British Museum, relative to "Two bas-reliefs of Assyrian sculpture removed from Khorsabad." These bas-reliefs form a portion of the discoveries of M. Botta, and were sent by our consul at Mosul (Mr. Rassam) to the late Sir Robert Peel, who sent them to the British Museum for examination and inspection. They were two heads of colossal size, of which engravings are furnished in the publication named. One is that of a warrior; the other, which is that of an eunuch, has the features of a man, rather

full, with aquiline nose, soft expression, hair gathered in undulating curls to the back of the head, where it clusters in short spiral curls, with a light fillet colored blue and red passing over the head. The chin is particularly double, and there are ear-rings resembling the Egyptian symbol of life. Mr. Birch, looking to this as a work of art, says: "The eyes and brows of the head of the eunuch are most peculiar in their treatment. The eyebrow is literally cut out and colored black; the lids of the eyes are shell-like, and dyed with the stibium, and the pupil is for a full eye, and colored black. A singular effect is produced by the pupil not being so large as the eye; but this

was, no doubt, very different when the monument was *in situ*, as the height must have rendered it less striking. The chin is peculiarly double and full, although the rest of the face indicates youth; but it would appear from the Egyptian monuments that some of the tribes of Central Asia—the Cheta, for example, a people in the vicinity of Mesopotamia, had this physical development. There is a smile upon the features; and the whole bears much relation to the Egyptian sculptures in part of the treatment; while, on the other hand, it is unequivocally of the same school as early Persian art, and the rigid works of the Archaic-Greek school, executed prior to the Persian invasion of Greece."

FIFTEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

HORSES AND CHARIOTS.—ISAIAH XXXVI. 8.

An essentially equestrian people like the Assyrians must have been singularly impressed by the absence of cavalry among the Hebrews; and, seeing the inordinate estimation in which this kind of force was anciently held, this fact goes far to explain the supreme contempt with which the Assyrian commander speaks of the military resources of the nation. That this had its root in this circumstance is shown by the bitter taunt of Rabshakeh—"Now therefore, give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them." There are other passages indicating that, in the view of the Jews, the Assyrians were remarkable for their cavalry. So Hosea (xiv. 3)—"Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses."

In fact the mention of Assyria is as much connected with horses, as that of Arabia would be now. Arabia, on the other hand, is connected with camels, never with horses; and there appears reason to doubt that Mesopotamia and the neighboring deserts of Arabia, possessed in Biblical times that noble breed of horses for which it has since been famous, and whether

it was not rather introduced shortly before the Arabian conquest. Solomon would not have needed to import horses from Egypt, had Arabia possessed an equal or a more valuable breed. It may indeed be urged, that this king wanted horses trained for chariots, not saddle-horses, for which alone Arabia has ever been celebrated. But to this it may be answered, Arabians are always represented as riding on camels; and it is historically stated that the Arabians in the army of Xerxes were mounted on camels, and were placed in the rear, *because the camels frightened the horses.** This fact is remarkable, as showing that the camels were not then accustomed to the company of horses in their own country.

But to return to Assyria and its horses, it may be remarked that the Kurds, the modern inhabitants of Assyria, are to this day noted for their horses and horsemanship in a degree scarcely second to the Arabians. We are not sufficiently versed in the "points" of the horse to be able to say, whether the breed that we ourselves continually saw and rode upon in that country, be the same as that of the sculptures; but, speaking from inexperienced impression merely, we should think the Assyrian horses of the sculptures of somewhat heavier build, which may arise from their being among the Assyrians not less in demand—perhaps more in demand—for the chariot than for the saddle. The horse of the sculptures is, however, in the judgment of Layard, "well formed, and apparently of noble blood." He adduces some reasons for believing that the Egyptians derived their horses from the Assyrian provinces. To these horses he applies the allusion of the prophet (Habakkuk i. 8) to the horses of the Chaldeans, which must have been of the same breed—"Their horses are swifter than the leopards, and more fierce than the evening wolves." He declares that no one can look at the horses of the early Assyrian sculptures, without being convinced that they are drawn from the finest models. The head is small and well shaped, the nostrils large and high, the neck arched, the body long, and the legs slender and sinewy. That the Assyrians carefully

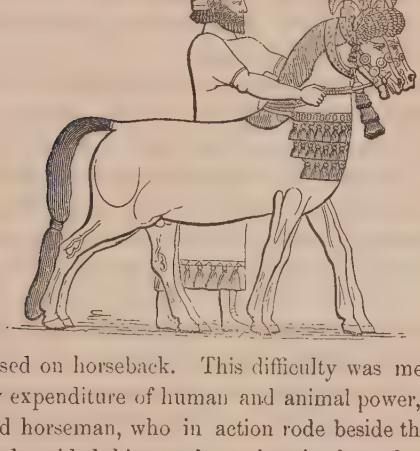
* Herodotus, vii., 87.

portrayed animals, is shown by their figures of lions, bulls, goats, and stags, so frequently introduced in their bas-reliefs; it is highly probable, therefore, that they carefully copied the forms of their horses, and showed the points for which they were most distinguished. It is not unlikely that, as Layard well supposes, the plains watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, producing during the winter and spring the richest pasturage, were at the earliest period as celebrated as they are now for the rearing of horses, particularly when so large a supply must have been demanded for the cavalry and chariots of Assyrian armies.

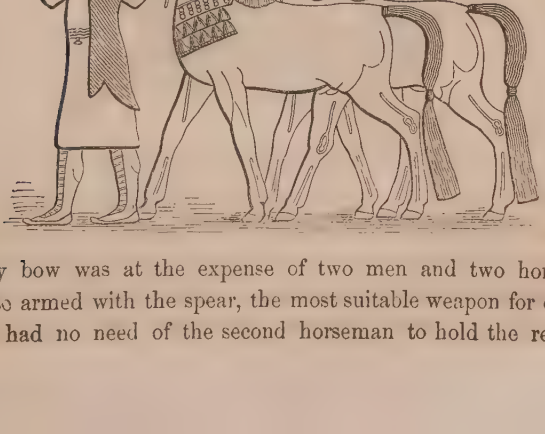
Mounted cavalry formed an important part of the Assyrian army. Horsemen are seen in the earliest sculptures at Nimrud, and disciplined bodies of cavalry appear in the bas-reliefs at Koyunjik. Correspondingly, the apocryphal book of Judith represents the Assyrian general, Holofernes, as having in his army 12,000 archers on horseback; and Ezekiel (xxiii. 6) speaks of "Assyrians clothed in blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses." The king himself, however, is never represented on horseback in sculptures, although a horse richly caparisoned, apparently for his use—perhaps to enable him to flee, should his chariot horses be killed—is frequently seen led by a warrior, and following his chariot. In the earliest sculptures, the horses, except such as follow the king's chariot, are unprovided with clothes or saddles. The rider is seated on the naked back of the animal. At a later period, however, a kind of pad appears to have been introduced; and in a sculpture at Koyunjik, is represented a high saddle, not unlike those still used in the East. Stirrups were not known even to the Romans of the empire, and are not to be looked for in Eastern sculptures.

The prophet Nahum (iii. 3) says—"The horsemen lifted up both the bright sword and the glittering spear." Accordingly, the horsemen are armed either with the sword and bow, or with the sword and long spear. They wore short tunics, and their legs and feet were bare. When riding without pads or saddles, they sat with their knees almost on a level with the horse's back; but after the introduction of saddles, their limbs appear

to have been more free, and they wore greaves or boots, but were still unprovided with stirrups. An archer requires both his hands to be disengaged for his weapons; and the bow would therefore appear to be the most unsuitable of weapons



to be used on horseback. This difficulty was met at certainly a costly expenditure of human and animal power, by providing a second horseman, who in action rode beside the archer, and held and guided his steed, so that, in fact, the efficiency of

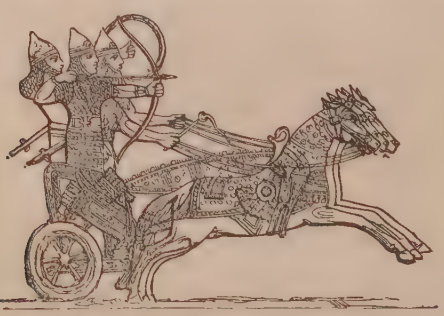


every bow was at the expense of two men and two horses. Those armed with the spear, the most suitable weapon for cavalry, had no need of the second horseman to hold the reins.

The riding horses are less profusely ornamented than those in harness, the horsemen being probably of inferior rank to those who fought in chariots. The head stall was surmounted by an arched crest, and around the neck was an embroidered collar, ending in a rich tassel or bell. It will be called to mind, that bells for the necks of horses are mentioned by the prophet Zechariah (xiv. 20). In at least one of the sculptured examples, the bell very distinctly appears.

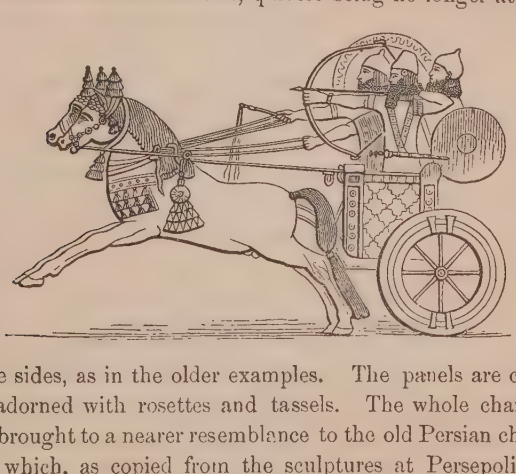
Chariots also figured largely in Assyrian warfare. The king and principal officers always appear in chariots, never on horseback, nor, except in sieges, on foot. Each chariot contained two or three persons. The king was always accompanied in the chariot by two or three attendants—the charioteer, and the warrior who protected the royal person with a shield, the latter being exchanged, in time of peace, for an eunuch with an umbrella.

The Assyrian chariot seems to have been made of wood. It appears to have been open behind, but, unlike those used by the Egyptians, to have been completely panelled at the sides. It varied considerably in form at different periods. As represented in the earliest monuments, it is low, with the upper part



rounded. To each side were affixed, as in Egypt, two quivers containing arrows, a small crooked bow, a javelin, and a battle-axe. In the Egyptian chariots, there are only two horses; but although the yoke of the Assyrian chariot is only for two, there are generally three in harness. As there is no indication of

traces, nor can it be ascertained from the sculptures how the third horse is attached, it is conjectured that it was intended to supply the place of one of the other horses when killed or seriously wounded, and did not actually draw. In these earlier chariots, the wheels have six spokes, but in later examples the number is eight. Other changes, both in the form and size of the chariot, also appear. It is larger, and much higher, the wheel alone being almost as high as a man. The upper part is not rounded, but square, with a projection in front, that may have been a case to receive arrows, quivers being no longer attached



to the sides, as in the older examples. The panels are carved and adorned with rosettes and tassels. The whole chariot is thus brought to a nearer resemblance to the old Persian chariot, with which, as copied from the sculptures at Persepolis, the public have long been acquainted. They seem to have been often completely covered with ornaments. Those represented in the earlier monuments had a very elegant moulding or border around the sides; and Layard thinks they were probably inlaid with gold, silver, and precious woods, and also painted. In one case, the figure of a king drawing a bow is placed as a device on a chariot panel. Chariots armed with scythes do not appear, though the statement of a Greek historian might have led us to look for them.*

* CTESIAS, who says that chariots so armed were in the army of Ninus; but scholars seldom rely much upon the uncorroborated statements of this author

The harness and trappings of the chariot horses were extremely rich and elegant—certainly not less so than those of the Egyptians. Plumes waved over the heads of the animals, or fanciful crests rose gracefully in an arch above their ears, and descended in front to their nostrils; and to these ornaments were sometimes appended long ribands or streamers, that floated in the wind. Large tassels of wool or silk, dyed of many colors, fell on the forehead, and were attached to many parts of the harness. The bridle generally consisted of a head stall, a strap divided into three parts connected with the bit, and straps over the forehead, under the cheeks, and behind the ears. All these details were elaborately ornamented; and it is probable that the bit, as well as many ornaments of the bridle and trappings, were of gold and other precious materials. Round the necks of the horses were hung tassels, rosettes, and engraved beads. Three straps, richly embroidered, passed under the forepart of the belly, keeping the harnesses and the chariot pole in their places; and a breast-band, adorned by tassels, was also supported by these straps. Embroidered clothes, or trappings, were frequently thrown over the backs of the chariot horses, and almost covered the body from the ears to the tail. Such clothes are mentioned by Ezekiel (xxvii. 20), "Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots."

The chariot horses of the later Assyrian period differed entirely in their trappings and ornaments from those of the earlier. High plumes, generally three in number, and rising one above the other, waved over their heads. Frequently an arched crest and cluster of tassels were placed between their ears. Similar tassels fell over their foreheads and hung around their necks. The harness attached to the yoke was more profusely ornamented with rosettes and fringes than that of the earlier Egyptian chariot, but the ornaments showed less variety of taste. The manes of the horses were either allowed to fall loosely on the neck, were plated, or were cut short, and stood erect. In the earlier sculptures, the tails of the horses were simply bound in the centre with ribands; in the later, the end

is plaited, as is still the case in Persia and Turkey, and tied up in a bunch.

These particulars will furnish an adequate conception of the nature and appearance of that Assyrian force in horses and chariots, which invaded first Israel and then Judah, and which, from the frequent allusions of the prophets, appear to have been regarded by the people generally with mingled feelings of admiration and alarm.

FIFTEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

TERMS OF SUBMISSION.—ISAIAH XXXVI. 16–20.

After a great deal of preliminary abuse of the same quality of "coarseness," which still characterizes even the state language of the East, and which, in this case, was destined to strike fear into the hearts of the troubled Hebrews, Rabshakeh at length comes to deliver in direct language "the words of the great king, the king of Assyria." He is careful, doubtless for good reasons, to deliver this message in the first person, as the mouth-piece of the king, whose words he brings, and in whose name he speaks; and careful observers may note some essential differences between the tone of this message and that of the preamble by which the boisterous ambassador introduces it. It is more sober, dignified, and quiet. It reasons and persuades rather than threatens; and its purport is to set forth the advantages and necessity of a peaceable submission, and the utter uselessness of opposition. It ends, indeed, in what is to us, and was to those who heard the words, atrocious blasphemy. It evinces that he knew not the Lord, whose power he put, as the heathen were apt to do, on a level with that of other gods, whose votaries he had overcome; but it does show that he knew the almightiness of Jehovah, and defied it.

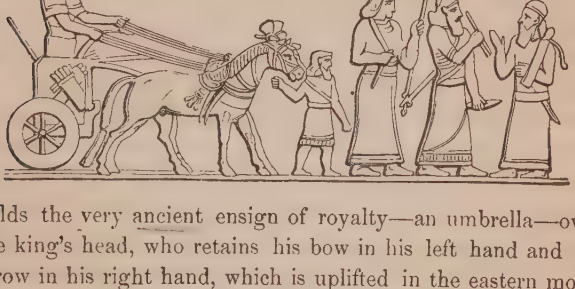
We may not pass unobserved the title of "the great king," which the Assyrian general gives to his master,—a title which the Jews gave to the Lord only, but which the lords of the great

eastern empires were fond of appropriating to themselves. It is in their view equivalent to the other Oriental title of "king of kings," and in essential significance corresponds to "emperor." It is likely that the wedge-shaped inscriptions, when they come to be more fully understood, will furnish some curious facts in illustration of the Assyrian practice in the use of high regal titles.

This "great king," by the mouth of his spokesman, invites the Jerusalemites to "make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one of the waters of his own cistern." This looks very sweet and pleasant; and the uninitiated may be apt to wonder how these intractable Hebrews could resist the proposed amenities and agreeable prospects. Interpreted into plainer language, the invitation loses something of its pleasant color. It means,—Come out and submit yourselves to me, acknowledge my authority, abandon your defence, and forego your national liberties, and in testimony thereof come not empty handed, but bring out a handsome tribute, in acknowledgment of the obligations your new relation inspires; and, having thus become my subjects and servants, you shall then not be slain, nor your cities destroyed, but you shall be left for a time in the enjoyment of your substance, and may yet for a time eat to the full of your own food.

The passage shows, moreover, what terms the Assyrians were accustomed to offer to those who submitted to their yoke without resistance; and they are not essentially different from those which invaders have in all ages offered or imposed. The Israelites themselves seem to have offered such terms to all but the doomed nations of Canaan. Perhaps they are as favorable (except as regards the ultimate deportation, to which we shall presently come) as those now offered by European conquerors. Perhaps they are rather more so,—as a modern fashion has grown up of making a conquered people pay for the expense of being conquered. However, in connection with this subject, and in remembrance of the treaties formerly contracted with

Assyrian monarchs by former kings of Israel and Judah, one of the sculptured slabs of Nineveh acquires a scriptural interest, as it represents the formation of a treaty of peace of this nature. In this slab the king has alighted from his chariot to meet on foot, with condescending consideration, the ambassador, or prince of the other contracting party. An eunuch



holds the very ancient ensign of royalty—an umbrella—over the king's head, who retains his bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right hand, which is uplifted in the eastern mode of contracting a solemn engagement. The other party who stands before him has also his right hand raised in like manner. The aspect of this person is that of one who has been brought to terms *after* an engagement, yet has not been wholly conquered. There is nothing to indicate equality with the king, on the one hand, while on the other, there is no appearance of abased submission. His body is not bent; and he retains his sword by his side, although his hands are empty,—indeed his left arm is in a kind of sling, as if to indicate that he had been wounded.* And if it be thus rightly interpreted it may be taken as almost a Hogarthian touch on the part of the Assyrian sculptor, for indicating a man's condition. The man's arm in a sling, under such circumstances, is the history of a battle. We at first doubted whether this seeming sling might not be a kind of handcuff; but on reflection it appeared that the ancient Oriental handcuffs confined both the hands

* The point is differently rendered in engravings; but this is the impression we derive from a narrow inspection of the original marble in the British Museum.

together; and if one hand were handcuffed, it would surely be the right hand, especially in the case of a man admitted to come before the king with his sword at his left side. He has therefore a wounded arm in a sling; being, we apprehend, the only example in ancient sculpture or painting of such a circumstance.

The "great king," however, does not deceive the Hebrews into the expectation that their submission will secure them in the permanent possession of their own lands. No; that was not the policy of the eastern conquerors of those ages. They removed nations from one land to another, partly to concentrate valuable populations in places where most needed, and partly with the object of securing submission by the destruction of local associations—the ties of country and home, which form the basis of national patriotism. The king therefore says, that this is only a temporary arrangement, until, after finishing the campaign, he shall return and "take you away;" but this grievous intimation he tries to mollify by informing them, that they will be nothing the worse for their removal, for they will be taken "to a land like your own land." Like it in what?—like it in being, as Palestine, "a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards."

This representation is correct enough. Assyria was the country intended, and this country has, in fact, considerable resemblance to Palestine, in its being a land of mountains and plains,—with analogous variations of temperature, and with nearly similar productions from the soil. Taking Assyria as corresponding nearly to the modern Kurdistan, it may be described as a country, the general elevation of which, and the height of its mountain ranges, secures it from the scorching heats to which the people of Mesopotamia are exposed in the very same latitude; while the cheerful vales and the long terraces on the sides of the mountains boast of the green tragacanth plants, at the same time that they yield gum and produce the vine, as well as other fruit trees. The forests, in addition to the ash and oriental plane, have the finest walnut trees in great abundance; and the oaks are noted for the qual-

ity of their gall-nuts. The honey, which is found in holes under ground, or in hives made of mud, is remarkably fine, as well as very abundant, and it produces a fragrant wax, which is largely exported. In addition to these, the valleys also grow silk, cotton, tobacco, hemp, pulse, wheat, barley, rice, Indian corn, sumach, sesame, and the castor-oil plant. Melons and pumpkins grow to an enormous size, and flowers of all kinds, particularly the gigantic rose, are abundant. When Herodotus says that the Assyrians did not cultivate the vine, the olive, nor the fig, he must either have been mistaken, or have limited his observations to the plains towards Mesopotamia, where the heat of summer is very strong. The vine is actually represented in the sculptures of Nineveh; and, indeed, the testimony of the present text is conclusive as to the corn and the vines.

FIFTEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

TURNED WATERS.—ISAIAH XXXVII. 25–29.

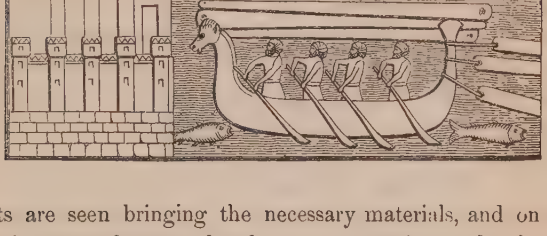
THE Lord's answer through the prophet Isaiah to the prayer of king Hezekiah, is a striking denunciation of the pride and arrogance of the Assyrian king, and comprises some particulars to which the attention of the reader may well be called.

He is represented as boasting: "I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places." Various interpretations of this have been proposed. Some think the first clause refers to his greatness, as evinced in the wells he had digged in his own country for the supply of water, on the common ground, that this was in arid countries a work so great and meritorious as to become the boast of kings. But this seems to have no special application to the expedition in which he is engaged, and to which the other examples of his greatness refer. And, besides, Assyria is by no means an arid country; and expressions which might be appropriate in regard to Arabia, Syria, or Persia, cease to be so in that land. We, therefore, greatly

prefer the interpretation which takes the verse to mean, that so irresistible was the king's force and so numerous his troops, that no difficulties or privations could retard his victorious march; where there was no water when wanted, he digged for it till it was found; and that if found where he desired it not, as in the ditches and canals around fortified places, he had speedily caused it to be exhausted—both circumstances implying great resources and innumerable hands. It is with the last fact that we are chiefly concerned, the other needing little explanation.

It was then as now usual, whenever practicable, to surround a fortified place with ditches, with canals, or with streams—diverted from their course to be brought around the fortress. Often the bend of a river was regarded as forming a suitable site, for it was then only necessary to cut a canal across the base in order to isolate it. For the same reason, islands in rivers were much liked for fortresses. Both Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures exhibit such fortresses surrounded by water; and in Scripture history, we find "the city of waters," the capture of which seemed to Joab an exploit of prime importance, in that it ensured the taking of "the royal city." 2 Samuel xii. 26, 27. Nothing is clearer indeed than that intervening water was regarded as rendering a place almost impregnable; and that nothing ordinarily remained, but either to starve the besieged into surrender, or to find some means of diverting or draining the waters; and this last exploit the Assyrian king seems to say that it was always in his power to do, by means of the numerous hosts at his command. From their chief city being seated on the bank of a great river, and from their country being intersected by several secondary and many third-rate streams, the Assyrians seem to have had, however, more resources against a river fortress than any other people; more than even the Egyptians, whose experience was limited to one great river and many canals. There are several sculptures representing the Assyrians engaged in warlike operations against fortresses surrounded by water. Some of the bas-reliefs give, indeed, a kind of pictorial history of an attack by the Assy-

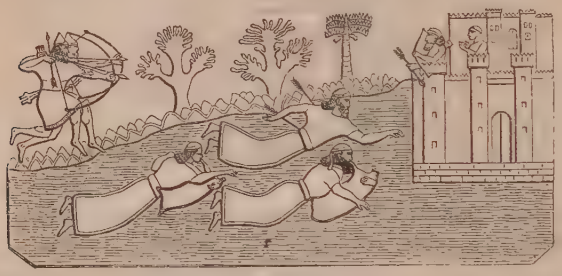
rians upon a water-protected fortress, that could not be approached without constructing a bridge or dyke. Numerous



boats are seen bringing the necessary materials, and on one slab is seen a fortress placed on a mountain, at the foot of which the dyke is already begun. All these boats, propelled by four or five rowers, are with few exceptions carrying squared planks, some of which, tied to the stern-post by a cord, float behind, and there are others which the boats appear to sustain in a position difficult to define. The war-boats thus laden are all turned towards the same point—the fortress to be attacked. At the foot of the mountain on which it stands a row of posts is seen, which indicates that the bridge or dyke is begun; and a similar row, placed a little above, shows the place was to be reached from two points. Near the mountain are seen sailors occupied in unloading the boats of pieces of wood. Some raise them on their shoulders and put out one of their ends, while others who are on land are harnessed to a cord which is passed through a hole in the other end. All this appears to refer to a maritime rather than a river fortress, so that here the besiegers could not resort to their favorite tactic of draining the waters.

In another scene we observe a fortress with towers seated amid the waters, in which are three persons swimming for life towards the stronghold. One of them, and he not the hindmost, pushes on by the force of his arms, the others sustain themselves on inflated goat skins,—the present, no less than the ancient, method of crossing the rivers of Mesopotamia. Well may they hasten, for on the bank are seen two Assyrian

warriors in their high caps, hastening on and taking aim at the swimmers, the second of whom has already been hit in two places. The adventure is watched with animated interest by the besieged from the walls. The men in the water seem



to be three prisoners who have made their escape from the enemy, and are pursued and well-nigh overtaken at the water's edge.

In the sentence passed upon this proud king, the Lord says: "Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears; therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." Commentators have usually explained

this as a metaphor drawn from the mode of dealing with wild or refractory animals. But it now appears that it was liter-

ally the custom of the Assyrians themselves thus to treat the captives of their sword. In the sculptures we see prisoners (probably of distinction) hauled before the king by a rope fastened to rings passed through the lips and nose. In the piece we have copied from Botta's magnificent work, the king is represented as holding a rope fastened to rings, which pass through the lips of three captives, one of whom is pierced in the eye by the spear of the king, at whose feet he kneels in supplication.

Sixteenth Week.—Sunday.

VISITING THE LORD IN TROUBLE.—ISAIAH XXVI. 16.

THERE is a sort of people of whom we hear little when they can do without us,—when the sun of their prosperity shines out, when their days are happy and their nights joyous,—when their purses and barns are full,—and when they can, as they suppose, afford to shun and look down upon the friends of their youth and the patrons of their struggling years. But when distress befalls, we hear of them again; once more we are remembered; once more we are most dear friends; their presence again graces our well-frequented doors, and our ears are filled with doleful tales of man's wrong to man, and our sympathies are claimed by the pitiful tears of self-condolence. How this may strike us,—whether with good-humored and forgetful compassion, or with austere repulsion, depends upon circumstances—upon habit of mind or judgment, or perhaps even upon the temper of the moment. But it is to be feared that many who have the most acute perception of the flagrancy of this demeanor, entirely forget that the case is altogether the same with themselves in their approaches to the Lord, who has made and redeemed them. Of such the prophet speaks: "Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." *Then*, but not till then, not before, they visit Him, they honor Him, they supplicate Him, whom in the

day of their prosperity they shunned and neglected. It is often said,—it is an ancient observation, which is rendered, by man's living experience, forever new,—that friends flock around us in prosperous times, and flee from us when the evil days come; but it has been less observed, though scarcely less frequent, that the friends who eschewed us in the day of their gladness, repair to us when their trouble comes.

It is often a profitable exercise thus to compare the great difference in our perceptions and judgment when a matter lies between man and man, and when between man and God. Alas for us, if in all things the same measure be meted to ourselves that we deal out to others. But it will *not*, in this. It may be doubtful how a man—and a good man too—may receive the ungenerous runagates who thus come to him. But there is no question at all how the Lord will receive even those who, after long and insulting neglect, have at last only been driven to Him by the stress of trouble and want. So that they have come at all, He heeds it not. To have come is of itself something. It at least implies confidence in his loving-kindness, his mercy, his overflowing compassion for all that want and suffer; and in his disposition to forget past slights and wrongs in those who have at last come to his door, to cast themselves upon that generous pity which, although a great and just King, He is enabled, in his beloved Son, to show to all that come to Him. Certainly the portals shall be flung wide open for one of these: he shall not want for robe, nor ring, nor sandals; and if the fatted calf be not killed for him, he shall yet, penniless as he is, eat and drink abundantly, without money and without price. The price has been already paid.

If we pray for the afflicted, let us pray not less earnestly for the prosperous and the indulged; they need our prayers not less, but more. It is surely a strong argument for the fact that our ultimate satisfactions are only to be found in the life beyond, that in this life it is never safe for us to be long without sorrow. —without some kind of humbling, scourging, or taking down. *There* we may possess joys measureless and unutterable, without stint, and yet without peril; but here we cannot. And

therefore it is, that the Lord who knows our frame so well, and remembers that we are but dust, takes care that those who are dear to Him, shall not, for any long time, be without the wholesome discipline of His chastening hand. It is his appointed means of bringing his wanderers home; and it is effectual by reason of that appointment, and not from any inherent quality of affliction, which apart from its appointed use as a means, under the controlling grace of the Spirit, would tend rather, like the repeated action of fire upon iron, to harden the heart and deaden its sensibilities; and it is only in the hand of the Spirit that they can have a contrary effect. The child sporting in the street flees to his home when he has received an injury or a hurt, or when peril appears; and it is his previous knowledge that it is his home,—that it is the only place in his little world where he can reckon upon safety, and where he is sure of protection and condolence, that gives this direction to his steps. So it is not the alien and the stranger whom affliction drives to God for refuge, but those who have already known Him as their Father, and have learned that his house, from which they have wandered, is their true home and certain refuge.

In reference to the text we have chosen, a plain but sensible and pious writer remarks,—"Even those who know and serve God, may become remiss and careless in prayer and in other duties, until God is pleased to reprove them for their sins, and to correct them for their profit. They may preserve the form, while destitute of the spirit of prayer; they may draw nigh to God with their lips, while their hearts are far from him; and they may seldom visit the throne of grace, and God may have their homage only on particular occasions. In the pleasant day of prosperity we are too prone, like the generation of Israel, to say to God, 'We are lords, we will come no more unto Thee;' and in this manner to discover our insensibility to the Divine goodness. But when the gloom of adversity arrives, and every refuge fails, then we are ready to exclaim with David, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the

land of the living.'—Psalm cxlii. 5."* To the same author we are indebted for the suggestion, that although God is frequently said to visit men, the expression of men's visiting God is peculiar to the passage now before us. "It seems to import, that in the time of distress the church remembered the Lord; they looked towards his holy habitation; they had immediate recourse for necessary support and reasonable relief to Him who is a refuge in affliction, and a present help in time of need."

SIXTEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

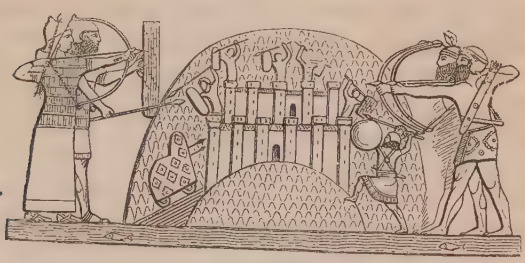
ASSYRIAN SIEGES.—ISAIAH XXXVII. 33.

SENNACHERIB had in his message defied the Lord to deliver Jerusalem out of his hands. The Lord's answer is: "Thus saith the Lord, he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it." This, of course, describes the proceedings the Assyrians intended to adopt in besieging the city, and which they would have adopted had not the Lord's preventing arm been interposed. It acquires a new interest to us from its being in accordance with, and very completely illustrated by, the sculptures of Nineveh.

The first step in the siege of a fortified place seems to have been to advance the battering-ram. This is not, nor indeed is any other engine of war, named in the text; but their presence on such occasions is expressed in other passages, and is implied here in the fact of "casting a bank" up against the place assailed, the only use of such a bank being for the advance and service of the military engines. Where no natural hills existed for the site of a fortress, an artificial one was made for the purpose. Hence all fortified places were on natural or artificial elevations. In this case, an inclined plane (the "bank" of the text) reaching to the summit of the mound, was formed of

* MACCULOCH, *Lectures on the Prophecies of Isaiah*. London, 1794. Vol. ii. p. 451

earth, stones, or trees; and the besieged were then able to bring their engines to the foot of the walls. This road was not unfrequently covered with bricks, forming a kind of paved way up which the ponderous machines could be drawn without much difficulty. These embankments not only enabled



the besiegers to push their battering-rams and towers up to the fortress, but also to escalade the walls, the summit of which might else have been beyond the reach of their ladders. The battering-rams were of several kinds, some were joined to movable towers, which held warriors and armed men. The whole then formed one great temporary building, the top of which is represented in the sculptures as on a level with the walls, and even the turrets of a besieged city. In some cases the battering-ram is without wheels, and it was then perhaps constructed on the spot, and not intended to be moved; and the movable tower was probably sometimes unprovided with the ram, though not so represented in the sculptures hitherto discovered.

That which the Assyrians were not allowed to do, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar afterwards did: for we are told that when he besieged Jerusalem, he "built forts against it round about." These forts or towers, if stationary, were solidly constructed of wood; if movable, they consisted of a light frame covered with wicker-work. For these works all the available trees in the neighborhood were cut down; and this was a very ancient custom, to which we shall soon have further occasion to refer.

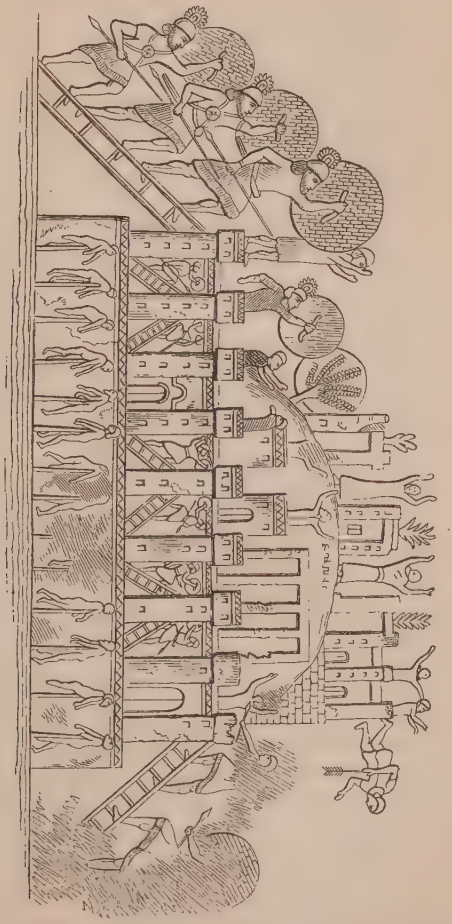
It is observable that when the battering-ram was unconnected

with any artificial tower, but was worked independently, its frame-work was frequently covered with a cloth or some kind of drapery edged with fringes and otherwise ornamented. Sometimes it may have been covered with hides. It was moved on either four or six wheels, and was furnished with one ram or two. The mode in which the rams were worked, cannot be made out from the sculptures; but it may be presumed that they were partly suspended by a rope fastened to the outside of the machine, and that men directed and impelled them from within as among the Egyptians.

The artificial tower was usually occupied by two men; one of whom discharged his arrows against the besieged, whom he was able from his lofty position to harass more effectually than

if he had been below, while the other held up a shield for his companion's defence. This alone would form an adequate illustration of the shooting of arrows against the city, and the coming before it with shields, of the text. But still more adequate illustration of this may be found. We apprehend that a body of archers kept harassing the men who ventured to show themselves upon the walls and towers of the besieged town or fortress, while the storming party advanced under this protection and beneath the cover of their shields to the walls, and mounted the scaling-ladders. Of course, there

were other applications of these instruments of war, especially as shield-bearers were much employed under various circumstances in protecting the archers from the missiles of the enemy.

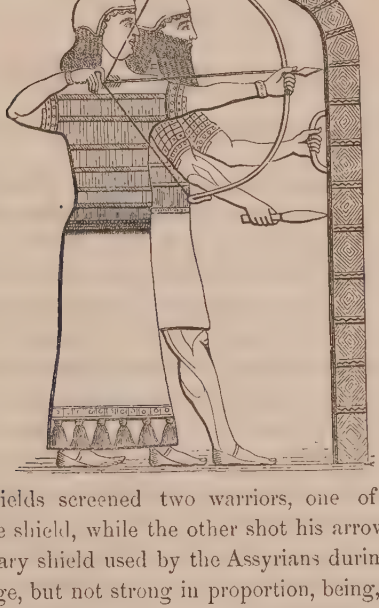


In a very interesting tablet representing the siege of a fortress, several remarkable particulars in connection with this

matter are afforded. Two walls, one within another, and strengthened with towers, enclose a hill, upon the sides and summit of which are several detached edifices. The towers have square windows and *arched* doors—a most interesting and important fact in connection with the controversy respecting the date of the arch, the antiquity of which has been very much questioned. The besiegers, armed with lances and protected by large shields, are ascending actively up the ladders; and that the archers are meanwhile at work, though they do not appear in the tablet, is shown by men transfixed with arrows falling from the summit of the fortress. The inhabitants are in dismay, and the place is manifestly on the point of being taken. Indeed, outside the whole length of the outer wall are a number of poor wretches impaled, after the peculiar manner of the Assyrians. These are no doubt prisoners, thus treated to strike terror into the besieged; reminding us of the account given by Josephus, of the number of Jews crucified for the same purpose, outside the walls of Jerusalem, by the Romans under Titus. In a very similar scene, there are variations which more clearly show the use of the archers to annoy the besiegers when the storming parties mount the ladders; for not only do men fall thickly from the walls, but numerous arrows are represented as sticking in the shields of the besieged, and as lodged in the mortar beneath the coping-stones of the towers. The base of this sculpture, instead of being like the other occupied with men impaled, offers a painful scene of prisoners, male and female, for the most part in bonds, driven alone into captivity with blows and insults.

One piece remarkably illustrates the lifting up of the shields and shooting the arrows. Two warriors are seen plying their arrows vigorously, while in advance of them is a man kneeling on one knee under his shield, probably on his way to the walls to join the soldiers, who, similarly protected by their shields, are trying to set fire to the gates—a device as old as the time of the Judges, for Abimelech was advancing to fire the gate of Thebez when he was struck down by a mill-stone which a woman cast from the wall.

Sometimes the bowmen are seen discharging their arrows from behind the cover of a high curved shield, which, resting upon the ground, protected the persons of the besiegers entirely from the spears and arrows of the enemy. Each of these re-



markable shields screened two warriors, one of whom had charge of the shield, while the other shot his arrows.

The ordinary shield used by the Assyrians during sieges was also very large, but not strong in proportion, being, like the one just described, made either of wicker-work or of hides—probably wicker-work covered with hides. Sometimes they appear to have been made of small pieces of wood or leather carefully united. There were, in fact, various kinds of shields suited by their form and materials to different services.

The arrows of the Assyrians appear to have been made of reeds, and kept in a quiver slung over the back. They were barbed with iron or copper, arrow-heads of these metals having been found among the ruins. The bow was drawn to the cheek or to the ear, as among the Saxons, and not to the breast after the fashion of the Greeks.

The text of the day, together with that in Ezekiel iv. 2, con

tain reference to all these modes of attack upon fortified places. In the latter, speaking of Jerusalem, the prophet says :—"Lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering-rams against it round about."

SIXTEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

ASSYRIAN RELIGIOUS NOTIONS.—ISAIAH XXXVI. 7, 10, 18–20.

Some curious matters in regard to the religious notions of the Assyrians transpire in the transaction before us.

Aware that the Hebrews avowedly trusted to deliverance from Jehovah their God, which to him must have appeared a reasonable trust, supposing that this God had the will and the power to deliver his people, Rabshakeh contended with them that they had incurred their God's displeasure, and that therefore they could not expect Him to move in their behalf. This was true enough in one sense, but not in the sense the Assyrian intended. He had perhaps heard generally that the nation was under the Lord's displeasure, and, casting about to find the cause, blunderingly ascribed it to the removal by the reigning king of the altars and high places throughout the land. He knew that these had been dedicated to Jehovah, and therefore concluded that Hezekiah had so far striven to put down His worship—little thinking that by this act he had won favor with God, and had done his best to uphold the purity and unity of the Lord's worship. Rabshakeh's mistake was natural enough, and is of a class of mistakes which foreigners are still apt to fall into, in passing judgment upon the imperfectly understood proceedings of a strange people.

Having thus shown, as he thought, that the Jews had no right to suppose the Lord *willing* to move for their deliverance, he further on asserts that He was not *able* to deliver them, from the fact that the deities of no other nation had been able to deliver their people from the Assyrian conquerors. "Where

are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and *have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?*" That was a home-stroke, and he knew it. But he goes on—"Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" Here he treads on ground full of danger to the Assyrians, by daring to build his inferences upon the supposition that Jehovah was no better than the local deities—which yet were no gods—worshipped by the nations his master had overthrown. The author of the books of Chronicles puts it concisely in this shape, as the germ of blasphemy which necessitated that the Assyrians should be taught by judgments to distinguish between Jehovah and the gods of the conquered nations—"And he spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of men."

Not content with this, and, as he thinks, to terrify and discourage them wholly, Rabshakeh in the name of his master, has the astounding audacity to pretend to a commission from Jehovah himself to destroy the land. "And am I now come up without the Lord against this land, to destroy it? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it." How are we to understand this amazing declaration? Is it a gratuitous falsehood, or is it founded on some misconception, which allowed the speaker to suppose it true? Some think it possible that, by some channel or other, king Sennacherib had heard rumors of Isaiah's earlier prophecy (x. 5, 6), that the Lord would send the Assyrians to punish the Hebrew people for their sins, and that Rabshakeh now pleads this as his authority, and to show them that resistance was hopeless. Others deem it more probable that he uses the name of Jehovah here as synonymous with that of "god," and means to say that he had been divinely directed to come up in that expedition. All the ancient warriors usually consulted their gods, endeavored by auguries to obtain what they regarded as the divine approbation of their plans of conquest; and thus Rabshakeh may mean no more than to say that his

master came up now under the divine sanction and direction. We object to this latter view; for JEHOVAH could only be known to him as the name of the national God of the Hebrews, and he therefore would be likely to identify Him, by that peculiar name, with his own national god whom he had consulted, and whose votaries held a destructive antagonism against other gods, which, although unusual among the ancient heathen, is recognized in this very chapter, and is evinced by the inscriptions at Nineveh. We should, of the two, prefer the former of these explanations; for we must remember that there were already numerous Jewish captives in Assyria, and that the Assyrians were already in possession of the neighboring realm, which had once belonged to the ten tribes, so that there was much opportunity of knowing what was said and done in Judah; and we may be sure there would not be wanting some who would bear to the ears of "the great king" the agreeable tidings, that the famous prophet of Judah had predicted punishment to his people through the Assyrians. This, upon the whole, seems to us more probable than the remaining conjecture, which is,—that Rabshakeh uses this merely as a pretence for dismaying the minds of the people who heard him, and to whom he chose especially to address himself, in the view of alienating their minds from their sovereign, and of inducing them to surrender. He knew, it is urged, that it was one of the principles of public life among the Jews, however little they carried it out in practice, to acknowledge the authority and direction of Jehovah, and he hoped, by adducing it, to bend them to his purpose. But if he knew so much of the Jews as to be aware of this, he could not have been ignorant that the simplest of the men who stood there upon the wall, open-mouthed to catch his words, must have had sense enough to see through so shallow a pretence.

In the subsequent message which the Assyrian king sent to Hezekiah, the subtle cajolery of the cunning cup-bearer is ignored; and, having heard of the trust which the king of Judah still reposed in his God, he plainly hurls that defiance against this God which alone was wanting to seal his doom. "Let not the God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem

shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." And then he goes on, as Rabshakeh had done, to point out the impotency of the gods of other regions to protect their votaries against him. It seems clear by this, that the king had heard of the promise of deliverance which Isaiah had been authorized to give after the intimidating address of Rabshakeh.

In laying this letter from Sennacherib before the Lord, Hezekiah acknowledges the truth of the statement which it contained as to the treatment of the heathen gods—"Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stone; *therefore they have destroyed them.*"

We have said that this treatment of the gods of conquered nations was not usual among the ancients, who rather respected the idols of the conquered nations, believing them to be the real and proper gods of those nations. It is pleasant, therefore, to see this fact incidentally but very strikingly corroborated by the Nineveh inscriptions, so far as they have been translated by Colonel Rawlinson. By which it appears that the Assyrians destroyed the idols of the conquered peoples, and forced upon them the worship of their own—a species of religious propagandism by the sword, which has been usually supposed not to have been exercised in the East till the time of Mohammed.

These intimations occur in the long inscriptions on the black basaltic obelisk which, according to Colonel Rawlinson's *latest* information, was set up about 860 B. C.,—that is, about fifty years before the events under our notice, and, therefore, near enough to them to be of contemporary value and interest. These inscriptions recite the exploits and greatness of an Assyrian king,* who is now held by Rawlinson to have been contempo-

* There is some question about the name of this king. Colonel Rawlinson, in his translation of the inscription, calls him Temenbar II., son of Assar-adan-pul (which he renders into Sardanapalus); but he now reads the latter as Assar-akh-baal. Professor Grotefend suggests that the former name should be read Shalmaneser. But this would be too late to meet Colonel Rawlinson's later view, confirmed as it is by the independent conclusions of Dr. Hincks. The point is one respecting which we must await further information.

rary with Jehu, king of Israel, and the prophet Elisha. It begins with an invocation to the gods of Assyria to protect the empire: "The god Assarac, the great lord, king of all the great gods; Ani, the king, Nit, the powerful, and Artenk, the supreme god of the provinces; Beltis, the protector, mother of the gods." Then follow fragments relating to other gods; and the favor of all these gods, with Assarac at their head, the supreme god of heaven, is invoked for the protection of Assyria. Then proceeds the record of the military expeditions of the reign, in which occur such passages as these: "And Ahuni, the son of Hateni, *with his gods*, and his chief priests, etc., I brought away to my country of Assyria." "In the city of Umen, I raised altars to the great gods." "I came to the land watered by the head-streams which form the Tigris. The priests of Assarac in that land raised altars to the immortal gods. I appointed priests to reside in the land to pay adoration to Assarac, the great and powerful god, and to preside over the national worship. *The cities of this region which did not acknowledge the god Assarac, I brought under subjection.*" "Then I went down to Shinar, and in the cities of Shinar, of Borsippa, and of Ketika, I erected altars and founded temples to the great gods." "I abode in the country about the rivers which form the Euphrates, and there I set up altars to the supreme gods, and left priests in the land to superintend the worship." "Sut-Mesitek, the king of the Arians, I put in chains, and I brought his wives and his warriors, and his gods, captive to my country at Assyria." There is more of the same kind, showing that the Assyrians showed little respect to the gods of the nations they conquered, and endeavored, wherever they went, to establish the worship of their own idols.

SIXTEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

NISROCH.—ISAIAH XXXVII. 38.

At the close of the narrative of the Assyrian invasion, we are told that, when the king, Sennacherib, had returned to

Nineveh after the destruction of his noble army by the blast of God, he was slain by two of his sons while worshipping "in the temple of his god Nisroch." The parricides fled into Armenia; and another son, Esar-haddon, ascended the throne.

This circumstance, regarding the death of Sennacherib, with the name here given to the god he worshipped, suggests, in connection with the facts yesterday produced, some inquiry respecting the religion of the Assyrians and the quality of their chief god.

The recent discoveries add little as yet to our knowledge of the principles of the Assyrian religion,—but they do furnish us with some information respecting the forms assigned to the gods, and the manner of their worship. Beyond this, the discoveries go no farther than to confirm the conviction previously entertained by scholars, that the religion of the Assyrians was, in its leading features, the same as that of the Chaldeans, namely, the worship of the heavenly bodies, especially the planets, under certain symbolical representations. This kind of religion is called Sabæism, and is of the most ancient date. It is recognized in the Book of Job, and is the only corruption of the primitive religion alluded to in that book. It occurs in the noted text,—"If I had beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon *walking in brightness*, and my heart had been recently enticed, or my mouth had kissed my hand (in worship), this also had been iniquity." It is admitted by all history and tradition, that this kind of worship originated in this part of the world, whence it spread in other directions.

Mr. Layard thinks that the monuments enable him to trace a wide distinction between the religion of the earlier and the later Assyrians. Originally it appears to have been simple Sabæism, "in which the heavenly bodies were worshipped as mere types of the power and attributes of the Supreme Deity." Of fire-worship, which was the earliest corruption of Sabæism, there is no trace in the earlier monuments; but there are abundant signs of it in the bas-reliefs of Khorsabad and Kouyunjik, as well as in a multitude of inscribed cylinders of the same age. Although, therefore, the new materials are few for

the illustration of the earlier Sabæism, there is enough known respecting the later period, to afford us some distinct ideas respecting the religious notions of this people in the period most interesting to us,—that in which the Scripture history and prophecy bring them conspicuously under our notice. It is a state of corruption in which the ideas of God and his attributes, as manifested in his operations, are no longer sought in the heavenly bodies alone, nor alone even in the element of fire, but in certain material symbols and images, in which these ideas were represented and typified. Whatever the learned may in this, as in other ages and countries, have said and thought of these embodied types or symbols, universal experience teaches that by the great body of the people—whose notions constitute the popular religion of every nation—these representations were regarded as personal existences, and worshipped as such. Mr. Layard labors to prove the identity of this religion with that of the Persians. It might be so in principle. But if it were so in practice, at the time of these sculptures, the Persians had been enabled to release themselves, by the time the prophets speak of them, from the more grossly idolatrous corruptions which, it may be, they at one time shared with the Assyrians.

We shall have to touch on this matter again when we come to contemplate the Persians. At present we limit our inquiry to Nisroch, who seems to be mentioned in Scripture as the chief of the Assyrian gods.

There is found in all the Semitic languages—Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac—a word, NISR, meaning an eagle,—or rather the whole genus *falco*, including eagles, vultures, and hawks. In the Bible, it is the word for an eagle, and also for vultures; for in Micah i. 16, the NISR is said to be bald; and in Job xxxix. 30, and Proverbs xxx. 17, it is said to feed on dead bodies. It has, therefore, been long supposed, on philological grounds, that NISR-OCH, which obviously comes from this source, designates an eagle; or, the syllable *och*, or *ach*, being intensive, "the great eagle." When, therefore, we find, among the sculptures of Nineveh, a very conspicuous idol, represent-

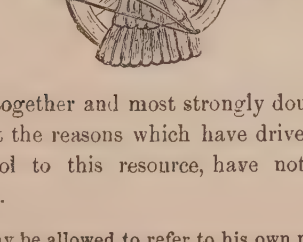
ing a human figure with the head of an eagle, it became easy to conclude that this was no other than Nisroch. This figure is also of frequent occurrence, especially in the early Assyrian monuments, and is supposed to have represented the Supreme Deity in one of his principal attributes; and in corroboration, Layard cites a fragment of the Zoroastrian oracles preserved by Eusebius, in which it is stated that "God is He that has the *head* of a hawk. He is the first, indestructible, unbegotten, indivisible, dissimilar; the dispenser of all good; incorruptible; the best of the good, the wisest of the wise," etc; and this, it must be allowed, is to the point, although the theology contained in it is Persian rather than Assyrian; and we hold the two systems to be less identical than Mr. Layard supposes. This author throughout represents the system as less offensively idolatrous than it really was,—an error excusable in one who seems not to have been well versed in the ancient religious systems and idolatries; and it may here be questioned whether the idols, which he regards as types of the Divine attributes, were not rather ideal representations of the planetary bodies. It was as such that images came to be brought into Sabæism; and under this view it is likely that the chief god of the Assyrians was no other than a symbolical embodiment of the sun, as the chief of the planetary bodies, and the immediate source of terrestrial life. This is the more likely, as the eagle is, in most of the ancient systems, a symbol of the sun. In some cases the eagle-head is united, not to the human form, but to the body of a lion; and in this shape it bears, as Mr. Layard himself suggests, a resemblance to the gryphon of the Greek mythology, which was avowedly of earlier origin, and connected with Apollo or the sun.

In the extracts which we yesterday gave from the inscriptions, the name of the chief Assyrian deity occurs under the

form of *Assarac*, and we concur with Colonel Rawlinson in regarding this name as representing the Biblical Nisroch. Indeed, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was made while probably this idol was still worshipped on the banks of the Tigris, gives Asarach in one case, and Esorach in another, as the equivalents of the Hebrew Nisroch. The presence of the initial N, in one form of the name, and its absence in the other, does indeed create a difficulty. It will be asked, Which is the right form of the name? and, from a natural disposition to set a higher value upon native memorials, and these sculptured in stone, there will probably be a general disposition

to concur in Colonel Rawlinson's opinion, that Assarac is the right name, changed into Nisroch in Hebrew transcription, for the sake of euphony, or by the mistake of some ancient copyist. But if we drop the N, we may, indeed, preserve the identity of the idol, but we lose the reasonable etymology which connects it with the eagle. Besides, in these languages we find this letter N, being the weakest of the liquids, often dropped at the beginning of words, and often exchanged for other liquids, but we do not in this situation find it added where it did not exist. It is, therefore, more likely that the N was dropped by the Assyrians themselves, than that it was added by the Hebrews. It also seems to us a delusion to consider that the native form of a name must necessarily be the most correct. A name remains embalmed, unaltered in a foreign tongue after it has once been adopted into it, while that name undergoes changes in the language to which it is native; and it is quite possible that the Assyrian inscriptions yet undeciphered, may offer us the name in the form of Nisroch. Besides, we must not be too exacting with regard to the uniformity of orthography of proper names. We see the spelling of such names

among ourselves continually changing with the lapse of time; and in no very remote age we might find the same name given very differently by the contemporaries of the man who bore it, and even by himself at different times. Thus, there were six different ways of spelling the name of Shakspeare by the men of his own age, and three of them sanctioned by his own signature, which is different in every specimen that exists. Why should we exact uniformity from the ancients in a matter in which so much latitude is allowed to the moderns?* Consistently, however, with his view, that Assarac is the only proper form of the name, and Nisroch a corruption, Colonel Rawlinson abandons the connection of the name with the eagle, and does not care to maintain that the eagle-headed figure is the representative of this idol. If Nisroch, identified with Assarac, be represented at all in the Assyrian sculptures, he is more inclined to regard him as represented at the head of the Assyrian pantheon, in that peculiar device of a winged figure in a circle, which, as he states, was also used by the Persians to denote Ormuzd, the chief god of their system. The identity of this figure with that of the Persians is beyond question; but that it was used by either them or the Assyrians to denote their



chief god, we altogether and most strongly doubt. Indeed, we have shown that the reasons which have driven him from the eagle-headed idol to this resource, have not the weight he ascribes to them.

* The writer may be allowed to refer to his own name, as affording an example of this lack of uniformity. He has seen it written in all these forms, by persons (some of different nations) who have taken it by the ear, or from cursive signatures,—Kitto, Kittoe, Kito, Kitts, Kitty, Quito, Cato, Cator, Cottle, Chetto, etc.

SIXTEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE PERSIANS.—ISAIAH XLI.

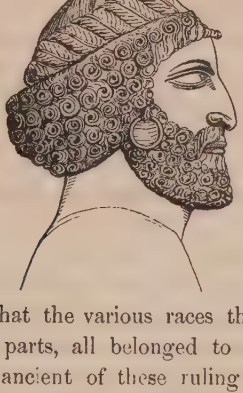
In this chapter begins a series of most interesting and remarkable prophecies respecting the Persians, and Cyrus, their great king. To these, we mean to give special attention, not only on account of their intrinsic importance, and their special adaptation to our mode of illustration, but because their prominent reference to an eminent character in history, imparts to them a sort of biographical interest, well suited to engage the attention of our readers.

The fact that the great Cyrus, his name, his history, his exploits, and his character, are set forth by the prophet long before he was born, has often engaged admiring observation and comment. But it has been less noticed that the very nation to which, under him, was given the commission to avenge the Lord's controversy with Babylon, and to inherit for its reward, the spoil of many realms, had scarcely any existence, and certainly no prominent existence as a nation, at the time the prophecy was delivered. To show this, and at the same time to furnish a suitable introduction to our further statements, it is desirable to give this evening to the consideration of the origin of this people, and of their condition at the time that Isaiah wrote, and at the time when Cyrus appeared.

From the best accounts to which we have now access, it would appear that the Persians belonged originally to that widely dispersed people who occupied the countries between the Tigris and the Indus in one direction, and between the Oxus and the shores of the Indian Ocean on the other.

Their aspect as represented in the fine old sculptures at Persepolis, distinguishes them from their Mongol neighbors in the north; and their complexion, as shown at this day in their descendants, from the Hindoos to the south-east, in a manner too decided to suffer any idea of their consanguinity to either, to be entertained. At the same time, their language proves

them to have been equally independent of the Semitic or Syro-Arabian tribes on the west; for the languages spoken in the regions west of the Tigris were altogether different in character and construction from those used to the east of that river.



It thus appears that the various races that necessarily had dominion in those parts, all belonged to the same original stock. The most ancient of these ruling nations were the Medes, Bactrians, and Persians. That the Medes were not of a distinct stock from the Persians, is evidenced not only by their history, but by the similarity of their language.

The ancient traditions of the race refer their origin to a region called *Eriene-Veedjo*, which we can discover to have been the mountainous tracts on the borders of Bucharia, as far as the confines of Hindostan, and northward to the neighborhood of the Altai mountains. Hence by successive migrations they made their way, until they eventually established themselves permanently within the precincts of that territory, which has preserved to the present day the name of Iran—the nation carrying with them in their migrations, the name of Eriene, which is obviously the same as Iran.

When this people quitted their original abodes, it appears that they were, like the Israelites of old, a nation of herdsmen and shepherds, acquainted with no other species of property than their herds of camels, horses, oxen, and sheep. A change of residence, however, was necessarily, as also in the case of the Hebrews, attended with a change of habits. The earliest

of their kings or chiefs, named Jemshee l, is celebrated in their legends as the first who introduced into the land of Iran a knowledge of agriculture, tillage, and cattle-breeding. He was also the legislator of the race, and instructed them in the policies of civil life; having been, as they believed, appointed to that office by Ormuzd, whom they worshipped as the source of all good; and he therefore, in their view, bore nearly the same relation to themselves as Moses did to the Israelites. The country to which they gave the name of Iran was, previously to their arrival, unoccupied, save by wild animals. The nature of the country did not, however, admit of all the new settlers devoting themselves to the same pursuits. It was but a comparatively small number who gave themselves to agriculture and occupied settled habitations; by far the greater part continuing of necessity to follow their old occupations as shepherds and herdsmen. In this manner, rather by the variety of their pursuits than by any diversity in their origin, the nation was necessarily split into a number of distinct tribes, of which some, like the Medes, acquired by agriculture and the improvement of commerce, wealth and power; while others, shut up in steppes and mountains, continued true to their original habits, which their situation may be said to have prescribed.

To this latter class belonged the Persians—the portion of the race to which our present attention is to be confined. Their original abode in Iran can be determined with certainty; for the general voice of all antiquity proves them to have been a race of mountaineers, inhabiting the wild and hilly region which is still known by the name of Fars, or Farsistan, whence Paras, which is the Hebrew name of the country; and whence also the Persis of the Greeks and Romans, from which comes our Persia. The names "Persia" and "Persians" are names applied by foreigners, and are, and probably were, wholly unknown to the natives as designations for their country and for themselves. With them Fars is but the name of a province of their empire; and they call their country Iran, and themselves Iranees.

We are, then, to regard the Persians as having been originally a nation of shepherds and herdsmen, inhabiting the rude country of Fars, or Persis proper, such as naturally fosters a hardy race of people, capable of supporting both cold and watching, and of enduring, when called upon, the severest toils of war. It appears, however, that although this region formed the central seat of the race, that race was by no means confined to it; for the names borne by some of the tribes, into which the nation was divided, bear evidence that their occupation extended over the steppes of Carmania (Kerman) southward, and northward to the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Agreeably to what has always been the case among the great nomade races, the Persians were divided into several hordes or tribes. Such, as we all know, was likewise the case among the Israelites, whose analogous division into tribes arose while they were under a similar condition of life. Among the Persians, the number of these tribes was ten; and they were no less distinguished from each other by their differences of rank, than by their modes of life. Three of these were accounted noble, the Pasargadæ, the Maraphians, and the Maspians; and of these the first was the noblest of all, as it included the family of the Achæmenidæ, to which the reigning dynasty belonged. Three of the other tribes were agricultural; and the remaining four retained the nomadic habits of their ancestors; but they are occasionally mentioned as contributing hardy bands of cavalry to the Persian armies. The extensive salt deserts which divide Persia from Media, as well as the plains of southern Persia, afforded inexhaustible pastures for the cattle of these tribes, whenever they thought proper to descend from their mountains. This division of the nation into tribes, a large proportion of whom are tent-dwelling shepherds, still prevails in the same country.

Such being the case, we must discard the idea that the Persian nation, even at the most brilliant period of its history, was universally and equally civilized. A part of the nation ruled the remainder; and this portion alone had attained a certain degree of civilization by its acquaintance with the arts of peace

and luxury. The other tribes continued in their original barbarism, and partook but little, if at all, in the improvement of the race. The Persian history, as it has come down to us, is therefore not so much the history of the whole nation as that of certain tribes, and possibly only of the most noble tribe—that of the Pasargadæ. These composed the court, and it appears that, almost without exception, all that was distinguished among the Persians proceeded from them.

From the above particulars, we shall also be led to conclude, that in a country so constituted, everything would depend upon descent and upon tribal distinctions. As the tribes were distinguished by a greater or lesser degree of nobleness, so there was also a gradation in the different families of which each tribe was composed. As already intimated, the most noble family of the most noble race was that of the Achæmenidæ, from which exclusively the kings of Persia were always taken.

The authentic history of the Persians commences, both in sacred and profane history, with Cyrus, whom the Scripture honors with many honors, such as are in no instance bestowed upon a foreign prince. At the commencement of his career, the Persians were under tribute to the kindred nation of the Medes, whose king was the grandfather of Cyrus by the mother's side. But Cyrus not only delivered his nation from that yoke, but reduced all the known kingdoms of Asia under his sway.

SIXTEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

PROVIDENCE IN THE BIRTH OF CYRUS.—ISAIAH XLI. 25.

The Divine appointment, leading, protection, and guidance were never more strongly manifested than in the case of Cyrus, whose career, to fulfil which he was raised up, was marked out for him before he was born. The intention of making him thus the object of a most special providence is continually declared by the Lord himself, through Isaiah, from chap. xli. 25,

"I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come," to chap. xlv. 13, where he says of the unborn Cyrus, "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways."

To contemplate the early life of such a man, therefore, becomes a matter of very peculiar interest, and we may well rejoice in the possession of sufficient materials for this purpose, in going through which we are continually struck by the occurrence not only of many signal providences, but by the repeated and distinct acknowledgment, on his own part and that of his heathen biographers, that a Divine providence watched over his early days, and preserved him from the many dangers to which he was exposed.

To bring out this important point, corroborative of the Divine nomination so emphatically announced by Isaiah, as well as because the story is in itself highly interesting, we shall glance over his early history, chiefly as recorded in the pages of Herodotus. It is not unknown to us that the authority of this account has been considered questionable, nor is it for us to maintain its accuracy in all its points. The time of the historian was, however, not so remote from that of Cyrus, as that the leading facts of the history, as learned by him in Persia, should have been forgotten or have become obscured; and it is certain that our enlarged acquaintance with the usages of the Eastern courts and with Oriental nations, has rather confirmed than weakened the authority of the narrative, by showing that it is at least truth-like, and hence the more probably true. That also it is not at variance with, but rather confirms and illustrates, the Scriptural intimations, is a circumstance greatly in its favor. Besides, it has now ceased to be the fashion to impugn the authority of Herodotus, as all modern discovery and research, in history, antiquities, and local usages, have tended in a remarkable degree, to restore the credit of the much-wronged "father of history."

We shall, therefore, give the substance of this narrative in our own way, and then point out how the Scripture warrants the conclusions which even the heathens were constrained to deduce from it.

Astyages, the reigning king of the Medes, was the son of Cyaxares, by whom the Assyrian empire had been subdued, and the Median power consolidated. He had a daughter called Mandane, who had a dream which, as explained by the magi, the interpreters of dreams, filled her father with great alarm. She was then of marriageable age; but Astyages, fearing the presage, instead of uniting her to a Mede of condition suited to her high rank, gave her in marriage to a Persian named Cambyses, a man of quiet temper, and who, although of noble birth, was, as one of the tributary race, regarded by the king as inferior to the lowest of the Medes. All now seemed safe. But in the first year of the marriage, Astyages himself dreamed that a vine sprang from his daughter, which covered all Asia. Having again consulted the interpreter, he sent for his daughter from Persia, that the expected birth of her child might take place at home. When she arrived, the king, her father, kept her strictly guarded, having resolved that her offspring should not live; for the Magian interpreters had declared the dream to portend, that the son of Mandane should displace him from the throne. To prevent this, no sooner was the infant born than the king sent for Harpagus, a nobleman with whom he was intimate, and whom of all the Medes, he deemed most trustworthy, and who managed all his affairs. "Harpagus," said he, "I commit to you an affair in which, if you are remiss, or betray me by employing others, the consequences will inevitably fall upon yourself. Take, then, the infant son of Mandane, carry it home, and destroy and bury it in the way that seems best to you." To hear was to obey, or at least to seem to do so. Harpagus loudly professed his devotedness, and took the child away with him. But in secret his heart revolted at the task imposed upon him, and the tears of deep compassion flowed fast before he reached his home. On his arrival there, he made known to his wife what had passed between him and the king. "And what," asked she, "do you purpose to do?" "Not," he replied, "to execute the command of Astyages. No; were he to become more mad and unreasonable than he is, I am not the man to yield to his will, or to

make myself the instrument of such a crime. There are indeed many reasons why I should not destroy this babe, which is, in fact, allied to me: besides, Astyages is old, and has no son; and if, after his death, the sovereign authority should descend to his daughter, whose son he now wishes me to destroy, what can I expect but to incur great danger? Yet for my own safety," he added, after a pause, "it is necessary that the boy should die: but some of the king's own people, and not I or mine, shall perpetrate the murder." He accordingly sent a messenger to bring to him one of the king's herdsmen, whom he knew to feed his flock in a mountainous district infested by wild beasts, and therefore fit for the object he had in view. This man's name was Mithridates, whose wife and fellow-servant was called by the Medes, Spaco, but in the Greek tongue Cyno. This herdsman kept his flock at the foot of a mountain* north of Ecbatana†—this part of Media abounding in lofty mountains covered with forests. The man arrived without delay, and Harpagus said to him, "Astyages commands you to take this infant, and to expose it in the most solitary part of the mountains, where most speedily it may be destroyed; and he enjoins me to tell you, that if you fail to kill the babe, or suffer him to survive, you will subject yourself to the heaviest punishment." Having heard these commands, and received the child, the herdsman set forth on his return, and soon reached his cottage. "It happened by *a divine providence*," says the historian, "that a son was born to the man while absent in the city." His wife and he were both at the same time anxious for each other's fate—he for the safe delivery, and she for her husband's return; for it was then, as now, a serious matter in the East for a peasant or other poor person to be sent for by a great man. When, therefore, beyond her hopes, her husband returned so speedily and uninjured, she eagerly questioned him respecting the business on which he had been so urgently summoned by Harpagus. He answered, "O wife, I have seen and heard in the city, things that ought not to be seen or to take place among our masters. The house of Harpagus was filled

* Now called Elburz. † Now called Hamadan.

with weeping, and I, when I entered, felt my heart sink within me; for I beheld a babe lying on the floor, sobbing and crying, and dressed in many clothes,* embroidered with gold; and Harpagus, as soon as he saw me, commanded me instantly to take the infant, and, carrying him away, to expose him on some part of the mountains most infested with wild beasts, saying that Astyages laid these commands upon me, and adding many threats if I failed to fulfil them. I therefore took the child, and have brought him, supposing at first that he belonged to one of the servants, for I could not imagine from whence he really came; yet I was amazed at the gold and rich apparel, and in recollecting the grief apparent in the family of Harpagus. When, however, I was upon the road, accompanied by a servant who left the city with me, and who delivered the infant into my arms, I learned the truth; for he told me the child was the son of Mandane, the daughter of Astyages, and of Cambyses, and that Astyages had ordered him to be killed. This, then, is the whole affair."

Having said this, the herdsman uncovered the infant, and the woman, seeing so fine and lovely a babe, clasped her husband's knees, and with tears implored that it might by no means be slain. But he declared it could not be otherwise, for that persons would come from Harpagus to see the child's corpse, and if he neglected the unpleasant duty which had been imposed upon him, his own life would be forfeited. Seeing that she could not thus prevail, the woman resorted to another argument. "Since I cannot dissuade you from exposing the child, and as one must of necessity be seen laid out, do thus: I have this day brought forth a son, but not a living one; expose this, therefore, and the son of the daughter of Astyages we will rear as one of our own: thus you will neither be caught wronging your masters, nor shall mischief be devised against us: the dead will obtain royal burial, and the living will not perish."

* This no doubt, indicated him as a child nobly, if not royally born. The reader will remember how the brethren of Joseph envied him the "coat of many colors," with which his father's partiality distinguished him.

The humane herdsman eagerly caught at this expedient. He gave to his wife the child that was to have died, and, taking his own dead son, he placed it in the basket in which he had brought the other, together with all its rich habiliments. This he conveyed to a desolate part of the mountains, and left it there. Three days after he repaired to the city, leaving one of his servants in charge of the body. Presenting himself to Harpagus, he declared that he was ready to exhibit the dead infant. Harpagus therefore despatched some of his most trusty attendants, and by them saw and interred the son of the herdsman. The woman therefore nursed him who was afterwards called Cyrus; for that was not the name she gave him.

SIXTEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

PROVIDENCE IN THE EARLY LIFE OF CYRUS.—ISAIAH XLI. 25.

HAVING yesterday considered the circumstances attending the birth and preservation of Cyrus, in the face of the interests engaged in his destruction, we may proceed to notice the incidents of his early life down to the commencement of his public career. In this portion of his history the indications of Divine interposition and guidance grow upon us, and the recognitions and acknowledgments of this on the part of the youthful hero himself and of the narrator, become frequent and distinct.

When the lad had reached the age of ten years, an incident occurred which made him known. As he was playing in the village near which the herds were fed, with boys of his own age, they, in their sport, bethought themselves of electing a king: and they fixed upon him who passed for the son of the herdsman. He forthwith appointed some to build his houses, others to be his body-guard, one to be "the king's eye,"* on another he bestowed the honor of presenting embassies; to every one appointing a part. One of these boys, being the son of Artem-

* As we should say, "inspector general." This was an ancient Persian, and highly Oriental mode of describing high offices.

bares, a noble Mede, yielded no obedience to the commands of Cyrus, who directed the others to seize him; which they did, and he flogged him soundly. No sooner was the youth released than, full of resentment at this treatment, he hastened home, and related with tears to his father what he had endured from the son of the herdsman of Astyages. Artembares, in high wrath, presented himself with his son before Astyages, and complained of the indignity he had sustained, saying: "O king, thus by thy slave, the son of thy herdsman, have we been maltreated!" And as he spoke he displayed his son's shoulders. Hearing and seeing this, Astyages, fully purposing to give Artembares satisfaction, sent for the herdsman and his son. When they both appeared, Astyages, fixing his eye upon Cyrus, said: "Hast thou, who art but the son of a slave, dared to use thus shamefully the son of a man who is first in my favor?" to which he replied: "O sire, I did indeed thus treat him, and with justice; for the boys of the village, of whom he was one, in their play appointed me their king, thinking me the best fitted for the office. The others accordingly yielded obedience to my commands, but this one was disobedient, setting at nought my will, on which account he was punished. If now I am guilty in this matter, here I am before you."

The king, who had observed him attentively while he spoke, was struck not more by the words than by the noble air with which they were delivered; and he began to trace certain resemblances in his countenance, his voice, and his manner, which awakened his suspicions; and these were strengthened when he reflected that the boy's age corresponded to that which would be the age of his daughter's son, if he were still alive. He, therefore, became anxious to question the herdsman alone, and dismissed Artembares with the promise that neither he nor his son should have any reason to complain. Cyrus was then removed to an inner chamber, and the herdsman, on being questioned, declared that the lad was his own son, and that his mother was now living. But the king told him sternly that nothing was to be gained by prevaricating, for that the truth should be extracted from him by the most painful tortures. He then

beckoned the guard to seize the man, who, being led away to the torture, declared the whole truth, relating all that had happened from the beginning, and concluded with entreating pardon for himself. This was granted; but the heart of the king was filled with wrath against Harpagus, who was summoned to his presence. This nobleman, having noticed the herdsman in the palace, did not disguise the truth, but related the circumstances, just as they occurred, affirming, however, that the child was dead, for that the body had been seen and buried by some of his trustiest servants. The king, concealing the anger he really felt at the evasion of his commands, repeated the account he had received from the herdsman; and went on to say that the child was living, and all had turned out for the best, as he had since regretted the course he had taken towards his daughter's child. In testimony of his satisfaction he invited him to supper, and desired that he would in the meanwhile send his son to be with the young stranger. Harpagus hastened home with a relieved and happy heart, and forthwith sent his son to the palace. The cruel king forthwith caused the boy to be killed, and his flesh to be dressed in various forms of preparation as food—all save the head, the hands, and the feet, which were placed separately in a dish. At supper various meats were presented to his guests, but Harpagus was supplied with the flesh of his own son. When he had eaten heartily of it, the king, with a cruel smile, asked him how he liked his fare; and on his declaring that he had highly enjoyed his repast, Astyages directed the attendants to deliver to him the reserved dish; and we may easily guess how he was horrified to behold there the head, hands, and feet of his own child. But, by a mighty effort, he restrained his emotions; and when Astyages asked him if he knew of what game he had eaten, he answered, "Yes, he knew; and was pleased with whatever the king had done." He then withdrew, heart-stricken, to his own house, taking with him the remains of his son.

This dreadful transaction is at least consistent with the character which the historian gives to Astyages, as evinced in the previous treatment of his own daughter's son. Concerning

him he now again consulted the magi, who had prophesied that if he lived he should reign. They were now disposed to consider his destinies satisfied by the mock royalty which his playmates had conferred upon him, and that his grandfather need be under no further apprehension concerning him; and they counselled that he should be sent back to his parents in Persia. He was accordingly sent home, and was most joyfully received by his parents, who had believed him dead, and whom the account of his early adventures deeply interested. They took advantage of the name of his foster mother Cyno, which name was often heard from his lips, to give out that their son *had been preserved by a particular providence*, for that when he was exposed he had been suckled by a bitch (which Cyno signifies), and this report spread far and near, and appears to have been still current in the time of Herodotus.

The lad grew, and seems to have excelled all his companions in strength and every manly grace. There were eyes that watched him with earnestness. Harpagus nourished the hope of making the young prince the instrument of that vengeance against Astyages, which burned the more fiercely in his heart because he dared not give it the least vent. At length, when Cyrus had grown up, this person sent him by a trusty servant a secret letter sewed up in the belly of a hare, calling him to vengeance against one who had been virtually his murderer; "for," said the letter, "by his intention you had perished, although *by the providence of the gods*, and by me, you survive." Harpagus further assured him, that many noble Medes had become disaffected to Astyages, and would declare for him if he incited the Persians to revolt, and invaded Media at their head.

Yielding to these suggestions, Cyrus convoked an assembly of the Persian tribes, and desired that every man would bring his axe with him. When they had assembled, Cyrus commanded them to take their axes and clear in one day the country around for three miles of the briers with which it was covered. This they accomplished; and they were then desired to present themselves the next day purified from the dust and stain of their past labor. Meanwhile Cyrus collected and slaughtered

all his father's flocks—goats, sheep, and oxen; and caused them to be cooked to entertain the assembled thousands, nor were bread and rich wines wanting for the intended feast. On the morrow, when they appeared, he made them recline upon the grass and partake of the feast he had provided. When they had finished, Cyrus addressed them, and asked them whether the labors of yesterday or the enjoyments of to-day had been the most pleasant. They declared that there was the greatest possible difference between the two, for that on the first day they had endured every hardship, but on this they had possessed every good. Taking up the word, Cyrus opened to them his whole intention, saying: "Persians, thus stand our affairs—if you are willing to follow me, these, and a thousand other good things, shall be yours; and servile labor shall be unknown to you; but if you refuse to obey me, toils innumerable, like those of yesterday, will be laid upon you. Now, therefore, follow me, and be free. *For I believe myself to be divinely ordained* to fill your hands with these benefits; and you deem yourselves not at all inferior to the Medes, as not in other respects, so not in military virtues. This being the state of your affairs, revolt instantly from Astyages." And they did so, according to this account, and eventually succeeded not only in casting off the Median yoke, but in establishing their sway over many lands.

Such, in substance, is the account of Herodotus. The writers of the early part of the last and the latter part of the preceding century manifested a prevailing disposition to reject his account of the infancy of Cyrus, and to prefer that of Xenophon; and this still operates, through the just influence of the writers to whom we refer, although the relative positions of the authorities in question have been considerably altered. The extensive researches which have since taken place into the history and antiquities of Egypt and the East, have confirmed and in many cases established, the authority of Herodotus in many matters in which it was formerly most disputed; while it is now universally recognized that the account which Xenophon gives of Cyrus in his Cyropædia, is, in the account of his

youth particularly, of no more historical authority than the Telemachus of Fenelon, to which it is in many respects similar.

Let us try to understand this matter a little; for it is well worth our while to have some distinct ideas on the subject. It is now generally admitted that Herodotus related what he heard—that is, what was the general report among the educated classes at the time and in the countries of which he wrote. His intention and care to give the true account, is incidentally evinced in this case by his mention, only for rejection, of the story of the bitch-nurture which Cyrus received when exposed upon the mountains. This, he distinctly states, was the common rumor of his time, but which he corrects and explains from the more authentic information to which he had access. Now, when Herodotus travelled among the Persians and discoursed with their learned men, the persons with whom he associated were those whose fathers had lived under Cyrus, and who must have been acquainted with his true history; and the accounts which the Greek traveller heard were those which these contemporaries of Cyrus had delivered to their sons. The value of this kind of testimony lessens in proportion to the number of links in its transmission, and Herodotus was in all respects nearer, in time, in place, and in circumstance than Xenophon, as we could show at large if space allowed and occasion required. Indeed, the matter might be thought to rest sufficiently on the fact, that Herodotus certainly intended to write true history, whereas Xenophon purposed to furnish a philosophical romance, were it not that so strange a preference has nevertheless been given to his materially different account of the youth of Cyrus. We are ready to admit, indeed we believe, that in the later and more public events of the career of the great Persian, the authority of Xenophon may be accepted, because the facts were more notorious, and because they were well known, even in his own country, as reported by the Persians of his age to many other Greeks who had been in the Persian service, and could not, therefore, be so easily turned from the direct truth to suit the purposes of his book;

but in regard to the youth of Cyrus, he had "ample room and verge enough" to trace what characters he pleased; nothing of public importance—nothing that impresses itself upon a nation's history, being involved in the details, beyond the simple fact that the child's existence had been preserved. That much obscurity hung over the early life of Cyrus, as evinced by the conflicting accounts of that life to which Herodotus refers as existing in his time, seems strongly to corroborate the recital which he has given, seeing that the circumstances which he relates account adequately for it. The same considerations may help us to conclude that the father of Cyrus was not a king, as Xenophon reports, but merely, as Herodotus tells us, a Persian of noble birth and a member of the royal tribe. If the father had been king of the Persians, and if Cyrus had, from infancy, been brought up in distinction and honor at his father's court, the facts must have been too well known to allow room for the existence of the story which Herodotus gives, or of the other to which he refers.

Seventeenth Week.—Sunday.

CYRUS CALLED BY NAME.—ISAIAH XLI. XLIV. 28; XLV. 4.

It is interesting to observe, that in the prophecies of Isaiah there is a gradual preparation, as it were, for the distinct production of Cyrus by name. In the thirteenth chapter, entitled, "The Burden of Babylon," he and his warriors are produced as the ministers of the Lord's judgment upon Babylon, without being named, and without Cyrus himself being characterized by any distinguishing epithet. But in the next prophecy, in the forty-first chapter, he is indicated as "the righteous man out of the East,"* and in the final prophecy, in chaps. xliv. xlv. xlvi., the Lord not only names Cyrus, but calls him his "shep-

* Isaiah xli. 2.

herd,"* his "anointed,"† and "the man that executeth my counsel,"‡ forming, taken together, a splendid series of characterizing epithets, such as never in Scripture are given to any but the most illustrious of the Hebrew race.

Now, in producing these prophecies, for the purpose of developing the information which they afford respecting Cyrus and the Persians, we shall find it necessary to connect together those passages which, in different chapters, or even in different prophets, bear upon the same portions of the general subject before us, which we shall successively endeavor to illustrate. This departure from our usual plan, is rendered necessary by the *dispersion* of the texts which refer to Cyrus and his doings; and which, although they might be separately considered in a commentary, must be brought into connection to furnish a coherent view of the subject as a whole and in its separate parts.

One of the designations of Cyrus which we have just adduced, "the man that executeth my counsel," furnishes the key to the prophetic point of view of his character and position, and which pervades all that is said of him, and promised to him. This forms the most striking and the most sustained of the instances in which the Lord not only asserts his supremacy in the government of the world, but reveals to us the mode in which it operates, and the form in which it is most usually conducted. The marked manner in which Cyrus and his Persians are represented as set apart to execute the purposes of the Lord, while they considered themselves pursuing their own objects, cannot fail to suggest many interesting reflections respecting the manner in which the Lord acts in executing the high purposes of his will,—often by agents who little think who it is that they are serving, and who are, it may be, as in this case, ignorant even of his name.

But the forty-first chapter brings Cyrus before us in his own proper person:

> "Who raised up the righteous man from the east,
> Called him to his foot,

* Isaiah xliv. 28. † Isaiah xlv. 1. ‡ Isaiah xlvi. 11.

Gave the nations before him,
And made him rule over kings?
He gave them as the dust to his sword,
And as the driven stubble to his bow."—Isa. xli. 2.

An old interpretation assigns this prophecy to Abraham, on no other ground, apparently, than that he also came "from the East," and was eminently a "righteous man." But this is now generally seen to be untenable; for none of the other circumstances enumerated in this and the ensuing verses are applicable to Abraham; whereas they all agree with Cyrus and his exploits. The greatest difficulty is, however, supposed to be found in the designation of Cyrus, a heathen, as a "righteous man." But this title, which indicates one who acts with habitual rectitude, who would not consciously inflict wrong—a just man, is not in Scripture confined to Israelites; and, what is more, it correctly describes the character of Cyrus, which, not less than his military exploits, caused his name to be long held in honor by his countrymen. The Cyropædia of Xenophon is, in particular, full of examples in point. They may be true or false; but if some of them be untrue, even they—like the Arabian stories of the generosity of Hatim Tai—illustrate the impressions which were entertained of his character. From these anecdotes it does not indeed appear that he always was right; but it does appear that he intended to be right. There is an amusing story of his boyhood,—that his tutor made him the judge in the case of two boys. One of them, a big boy, with a dress much too small for him took away the robe of a little boy, which was much too large for him, and gave him his own instead. It seems that both the boys were fitted under this arrangement, however injuriously effected,—and Cyrus decided that each boy should retain the robe that fitted him. For this decision his tutor chastised him, telling him that, as a judge, it was his business to have regard to the rights of property, and not to decide according to his own views of the fitness of things. Throughout his career we see him actuated by an anxious solicitude to do what he believed to be right and just, and to avoid wrong-doing. In fact, as

Dr. Henderson remarks on this text,—"It is not a little remarkable, that of all the virtuous princes of antiquity, he alone was thought worthy of being exhibited as a model of just government. Not only was he exemplary in private life, but his victories and conquests had for their object the vindication of law and justice. He is even said to have been an object of the Divine love. Isa. xlviii. 14. His destruction of the Babylonian empire, and liberation of the Jews, were special acts of righteousness; and the abolition of idolatry, which in a great measure followed the success of the Persian arms, comes also under the same head."

Let us now proceed to the important passage which forms the conclusion of the forty-fourth, and the commencing portion of the forty-fifth chapters:

"That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,
And shall perform all my pleasure;
Even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;
And to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.
Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
Whose right hand I have holden,
To subdue nations before him;
And I will loose the loins of kings,
To open before him the two-leaved gates;
And the gates shall not be shut:
I will go before thee,
And make the crooked places straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
And cut in sunder the bars of iron:
I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
And the hidden riches of secret places,
That thou mayest know that I, the Lord,
Which call thee by name, am the God of Israel.
For Jacob my servant's sake,
And Israel mine elect,
I have even called thee by name:
I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."

Isaiah xliv. 28; xlv. 1–4.

This is a very surprising passage. Here is a man singled out by name, above a century before his birth, and his charac-

ter and career distinctly marked out for him. The prophet himself was apprized of the importance of this circumstance, as appears by the last of the verses we have cited, in which two objects of this extraordinary revelation are avowed,—one, that a certain conviction might, by the evidence of this old prophecy, be wrought upon the mind of Cyrus himself,—and the other, that a benefit might therefrom result to the chosen people.

That so much stress is laid upon the fact of this remarkable man's name being given so long before he existed, directs attention to that name. The Hebrew name is KORESH, which is clearly a Hebrew form of the same name which the Greeks, and we after them, represent by "Cyrus." They tell us that this name was from a Persian word signifying the sun. Khur accordingly signifies the sun in Pehlevi, which was the ancient language of Persia, as it does also in modern Persian; and the prediction becomes the more remarkable, when we consider that the prophecy of Isaiah was uttered while the Persians were a remote and obscure people, when they could scarcely have been known more than by name in Palestine, and when no one acquainted with their language probably could be found in all the country. Yet here the prophet gives to a future man a name which exhibits the characteristics of a language unknown to the Jews, and which has in that language a marked and pointed significance, by reason of the homage paid by the Persians to the sun. It is the same—to illustrate the fact by a familiar comparison—as if a Persian of the reign of Nadir Shah had foretold that a hundred years thence a queen, named Victoria, should reign in England; the name being to him and his people entirely foreign and strange, and having significance only among a people whose existence was scarcely known, and whose language not a person in the country understood. So that, as we wish to show, the signal inspiration of this prophecy is enhanced by the fact, that the prophet himself could not, under any reasonable probabilities, have ever known that such a name as that which he gave to the coming man existed, that it was a significant name in any language, or that it was a name likely to be borne by any per-

son. We are indeed informed by the Greek writers, that Cyrus was the name which this prince assumed when he became king, his original name being Agra lates,—which might suggest to unbelievers that Cyrus took his new name to meet the prophecy. But not to dwell on the utter improbability, that at so early a period he should have known a prophecy extant only among a people who were at that time nothing to him, and to whose prophecies, if he ever did know of them, he was not then likely to attach any importance, we may remark, that the change was probably much less than it seems,—so slight, indeed, that the prophecy would have been just as applicable to the first name as to the second. There is reason to suppose that the name Agradates, which the Greeks give as the original name of Cyrus, was with them but a translation of the Pehlevi word or name Khur-dad, "gift of the sun," which we know to have been used as a proper name among them, as it belonged to one of the angels of the Persian system of worship, and must have seemed a very proper name for a prince of the country. The well-known name Mithradates, or Mithradad, has the same meaning. Such names have always been common in the East; only a Mohammedan of Persia, instead of Khurdad, would be named Allahdad, or Khudadad, "gift of God," answering to the Jewish name Nathaniel, and others of the same sort. But the Lord had not only called Cyrus by his name, but he had "surnamed" him, as our translation somewhat vaguely renders. What is meant is not that He had given him any surname—for the name already mentioned was his own proper name—but that He had made honorable mention of him, and bestowed upon him titles of high honor, such as no heathen prince had ever received. What were these titles and honorable distinctions? One of them, "The righteous man," has already engaged our attention. Two more occur in the passage last extracted,—"My shepherd," and "Mine anointed."

As to the first, of "shepherd," we know that good kings and rulers, are called shepherds in Scripture, as they are in the ancient classics. It is a fact, however that David, Cyrus, and

Christ in his Messianic character, are the only sovereigns to whom the title is personally given. In other instances it is applied to the office of sovereign rather than to the person of any particular king. What is more remarkable is, that this very title was one to which Cyrus was partial, and the purport of which he fully appreciated. Xenophon describes him as saying,—"The business of a good king and of a good shepherd are much alike. The shepherd ought, before all things, to provide for the welfare and safety of his flock, and to make use of these creatures consistently with their happiness; and a king ought, in the same manner, to make men and cities happy, and in the same manner to make use of them."

Cyrus, again, is called the Lord's "anointed," in reference to the ancient custom of anointing kings with oil at their inauguration. To be merely the "anointed." was, therefore, no particular distinction to Cyrus, as among other kings; but to be "the Lord's anointed" was a very high distinction: and it is given to him obviously because the Lord had in his providence appointed him to be the prince under whose rule the Jews were to be restored, and the other purposes of His will accomplished.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

JEHOVAH ACKNOWLEDGED BY CYRUS.—ISAIAH XLV. 3.

We may have some notion of a man's character from the effect which certain intimations produce upon his mind. In what manner, then, did the intimations we have cited affect the mind of Cyrus, when he became acquainted with them? We know that he did become acquainted with them: for this appears on the face of his edict for the restoration of the Jews. Josephus relates, what is highly probable in itself, that when Cyrus became master of Babylon, the Jews there showed and explained to him these prophecies relating to himself. We know, indeed, that there was one man in Babylon who had direct access to him, and who stood high in his esteem; and

that it is morally certain that this man would not fail to bring such important and convincing predictions under the notice of the king. This was Daniel, of whose connection with the Persians we shall hereafter have occasion to speak more fully. The effect was as here predicted; that Cyrus saw and acknowledged the Hand by which his path had been marked out, and his steps had been guided; and that he hastened to testify his convictions and his obedience by executing with earnestness the remaining task to which he had been called—that of restoring the Jews to their own land. These are the memorable words of the edict which was promulgated in writing through all his empire:—"Jehovah, the God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." There is nothing indefinite or uncertain in this. If he had said simply "the God of heaven," we might have been doubtful as to his meaning. It might have been understood of the god he had been used to worship. But here he gives him the name by which the Lord was peculiarly known among the Hebrews—the great name of JEHOVAH; and declares unreservedly his conviction that HE was "the God of heaven." Surely this is a great thing. It shows that Cyrus not only recognized the truth and inspiration of these prophecies, but that they wrought the conviction in his mind that the Jehovah, in whose name they were uttered, was, and could be, no other than the "God of heaven." What is the precise amount of the conviction thus effected, which is of necessity involved in this acknowledgment, we shall endeavor to show. It might for a moment be conceived, that, after the fashion of the heathen, when their attention was at any time seriously drawn to the claims of Jehovah, Cyrus supposed that he recognized in Him, under another name, the same supreme God to whom he had been used to render worship. But we shall see that this belief is incompatible with his declaration, when interpreted by the circumstances which surround it.

That this "Jehovah, the God of heaven," and not his own Ormuzd, "had given him all the kingdoms of the earth," he

could only have known from Isaiah's prophecy, which declared the intention to give them to him, so long before he saw the light. Indeed, if he believed anything at all of the prophecy, he could not but believe this—that he owed all his glory and his greatness to his being the predestinated and prenominated agent of Jehovah; and that it was He, and no other, who had made the nations "as dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow."

It was also only through Isaiah's prophecy that he could have realized the conviction that "Jehovah, God of Israel," had, as he says, "charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." For nowhere else is this command given; and nothing but the convincing evidence of this command being contained in an old prophecy, which, in so many other circumstances, unmistakably indicates him and no other, could have invested this command, to his thoughtful and sagacious mind, with an authority and power not to be gainsaid. The intensity of his conviction is, however, manifested by the alacrity and fulness with which he discharged the high duty imposed upon him. This gives a marked intensity to the "me." "He hath charged ME." "Me," and no other; it was not a duty imperative on any king of Persia, but on him personally and individually.

If we want further proof of the degree of conviction respecting "Jehovah, God of heaven," which the examination of these prophecies wrought upon the mind of Cyrus, we need not go further than the next verse of this famous decree, which renders still more precise his recognition of the God of whom he spoke:—"Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of JEHOVAH, God of Israel (HE IS THE GOD), which is in Jerusalem." Ezra i. 3. Here the Jehovah, to whom universal and supreme dominion had been ascribed by the title of "God of heaven," is more precisely defined as the One who was generally known as the "God of Israel," whose peculiar people were the Jews, and whose "house" was at Jerusalem. Let this be well understood.

Among the ancient nations, every one of which had its peculiar god, many knew that JEHOVAH was the God of Israel, and were not indisposed to regard Him as such. They would admit that He was as much the God of the Hebrews as the gods they severally worshipped were their own; and they knew and admitted, that He had often done marvellously for the deliverance of his people. There are many indications in the Scriptures of this persuasion regarding Jehovah among the nations who had opportunity of being acquainted with the Jews. What they disputed and resisted was, that He was *any more* than the God of the Hebrews. His claim to universal and supreme dominion—to be the Creator of heaven and earth—and not merely to be one among many gods, not only to be the chief and highest of the gods, but to be the only and sole God, besides whom there is none else; this they disputed. This they indeed scouted as a most arrogant and unreasonable pretension made by the Jews on the behalf of the God they served. This cannot be too distinctly borne in mind; for it is a fact which gives its coloring to the whole history of the Jews, and influenced all their relations with the ancient heathen.

But this which they so stoutly resisted, Cyrus frankly and fully admits. He multiplies phrases in which to express the intensity of his conviction. It might have been enough that he should so distinctly announce that the God of Israel, known by the ineffable name of JEHOVAH, was the "God of heaven." There could be no misunderstanding this. But in the very next sentence, in which he finds it necessary to describe the Lord as "the God of Israel," he, as if alive to the common notions in this matter, and as if carefully to exclude the remotest chance of being understood by that description to limit His almightiness, throws in the emphatic clause, "HE IS THE GOD," which can have no other meaning than "He is the true and only God."*

What was the practical value of this conviction, what influence it had upon his heart and life, we have no means of know-

* Qua es' verus ille ac solus Deus. Vatabalus in *Poli Synopsis.*

ing. The probability is, that, after the first burst of feeling, he was content to retain them as private convictions, without attempting to give them public effect, and without caring to take part in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. This he might think himself the more free to do, as the religion in which he had been brought up, presented none of the revolting aspects of the common idolatries, and there was no religion of the ancient world which, in its external, and in some of its internal aspects, approached so nearly to, or rather differed so little from, that of the Hebrews. That his belief was not altogether barren, we have seen by the act of obedience which the decree expressed. The full extent of his intentions and his liberality is hardly visible in the decree, as given in the first chapter of Ezra; but by the copy of it found in the record-chamber at Ecbatana, in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, we perceive that it was his wish that the temple to be built at Jerusalem by his permission and assistance, should be twice as large as that of Solomon. Ezra vi. 3.

The comparative simplicity of the faith which Cyrus held, and its entire freedom from gross idolatries—which the Persians hated as much as the Jews, and held themselves as strongly bound to destroy and overturn, was possibly, we may reverently venture to conjecture, among the causes which decided his nomination to these high destinies, and may account for his being distinguished by epithets of honorable distinction, never in Scripture given to any idolater.

We may indeed discover, in the prophecies which refer to him, a tender anxiety for him, a desire to correct the errors of his faith, and to advance his spiritual welfare. The passage we are about to quote immediately follows, and is closely connected with, that which we last cited. And as he must have seen the prophecy as a whole, it is difficult not to suppose that his memorable declaration—"He is the God," included an abandonment of the errors which the prophecy corrected, and an acknowledgment of the truths which they contained:—

"I am the Lord, and there is none else;
There is no God beside me:
I girded thee, though thou hast not known me;
That they may know from the rising of the sun,
And from the west, that there is none beside me:
I am the Lord, and there is none else.
I form the light, and create darkness;
I make peace, and create evil.
I the Lord do all these things.
Drop down, ye heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness;
Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation,
And let righteousness spring up together;
I the Lord have created it.
Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!
Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth!
Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?
Or thy work, He hath no hands?
Woe to him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou?
Or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?
Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker,
Ask me of things to come concerning my sons;
And concerning the works of my hands command ye me.
I have made the earth, and created man upon it:
I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens,
And all their hosts have I commanded.
I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will direct all his ways:
He shall build my city, and release my captives;
But not for price, nor reward,
Saith the Lord of hosts."—Isaiah xlv. 5–13.

The principal tenets of that religion as being here ascribed to Cyrus, assumed that the more ancient religion before Zerdusht—known to the Greeks as Zoroaster—was the same in its principles with that which he established on a more regular basis. It has now been proved, however, by Heeren and others, from the internal evidence of the Zendavesta itself, that Zoroaster lived before the time of Cyrus—probably in the time of the Median empire, if not in that of the Assyrians; and there is strong reason to hope that the progress in deciphering the Assyrian and Persian inscriptions will, ere long, put this matter beyond all doubt.

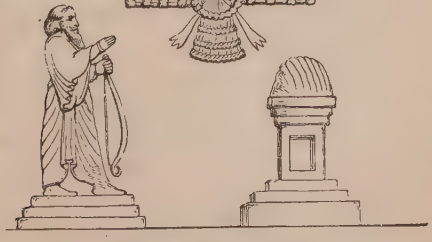
SEVENTEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

ZOROASTER.—ISAIAH XLV. 5, 6.

THERE are manifest allusions in Isaiah's prophecy to the leading principles of the Persian religion, as it existed in the time of the prophet, or at least in the time of Cyrus. It will, therefore, appear desirable to present the reader with some information respecting that religion, and concerning the man, under whose influence and teaching, it was reduced from grosser forms of idolatry into this better shape.

There are not wanting native accounts of the religious systems that prevailed among the Persians prior to Zoroaster, and these accounts are entitled to credit, so far as we find them in agreement with ordinary probabilities, and as they are corroborated from other sources of information.

According to these accounts, the primeval religion of the Persians consisted in a firm belief in one supreme God, who made the world by his power, and governed it by his providence; in a pious fear, love, and adoration of Him; in a reverence for parents and aged persons; in a fraternal affection for all mankind; and in a compassionate tenderness towards the brute creation. This is manifestly a tolerably faithful picture



of the old patriarchal religion, which all the races of mankind inherited from Noah, and of which all later symptoms were but different corruptions.

This purer belief, it is stated, eventually gave way to the adoration of the heavenly bodies, in the worship of which the religion called Sabæism consisted. To this succeeded the worship of fire, which, however, is scarcely another religion, but a modification of Sabæism, the fire being simply borrowed as a symbol or representation of the solar heat.* After this arose another form of Sabæism, which consisted in the worship of the planets by symbolical images; and this appears to have been the form of idolatry which subsisted at the time Zoroaster appeared; before, perhaps, it had wholly superseded the fire-worship, but when it had become a wide-spread corruption existing together with it, and while the worship of fire was still probably the formal religion of the country, the worship of or by images being an excrescence superinduced thereon. Zoroaster rent away this excrescence; and although his doctrine did not involve fire-worship, he seems to have accepted it as a suitable symbol of the Divine essence,—probably in the feeling common among the ancient speculators, that the people generally needed some sensible object of worship, and that the fire, to which they were accustomed, was better than any other that could be devised.

This man was Zoroaster, known in the East by the name of Zerdusht, of whose existence prior to the epoch usually assigned to him, we yesterday avowed our opinion.

The traditions of the Eastern Christians, of the Jews, and of the Moslems, regarding this remarkable man, might deserve attention, if only from the sort of doubt which has been felt, as to the place which might be with justice assigned to one, whose teachings were so superior to all that ancient heathenism knew and yet contained so much that was wrong in principle, and that involved the awful imposition of a pretended revelation from heaven. We know that Zoroaster had no such revelation.

* The cut is taken from a sculpture at Nakhsh-i-Rustam, supposed to be not later than the age of Cyrus, and represents a priest or king—most probably the latter, worshipping towards the sun, having immediately before him an altar, on which the sacred fire is burning.

The pretension to it, therefore, stamps the system with a flagrant character, which averts the sort of respect that might be felt for it as a human system—bad indeed, but still the best that the mind of man had been able to devise. It puts Zoroaster on a level with Mohammed. Both make the same pretension—both exhibit books alleged to be obtained from heaven, and both taught much that was in itself good and true—and both are guilty of the dreadful crime of making the Almighty responsible for their doctrines, by alleging that they received them from his hand. Of the two, however, Zoroaster was less culpable than Mohammed. Zoroaster did not know—at least, we have no evidence that he knew—that there had been any previous revelation of God's will to man, and he was far from intending to subvert any existing truth. But Mohammed knew that God had already revealed his will to man through Moses and through Christ; and, while admitting the truth of these revelations, he applied himself deliberately, with full purpose of mind, to subvert and stigmatize the most essential doctrines of the Christian faith—the divinity of our Lord, and the complete atonement for sin which his death upon the cross accomplished. He taught his followers not only to reject those doctrines, on which hang all the true hopes of man, but to regard them with hatred and abhorrence. This is a dreadful fact; and a due consideration of it, and of the too effectual bar which has been thus set up against the reception of Christianity by the followers of the false prophet, is enough to prevent our sharing in that dim respect for Mohammed, and for his teaching, which some thoughtless Christians have allowed themselves to entertain.

In saying that Zoroaster was unconscious of any existing revelation, we are not ignorant that the contrary has been urged in the traditions to which we have referred. But we attach no credit to them, only finding in them evidence that the authors of those reports were perplexed how to account for the good that was to be found in his system, otherwise than by supposing that he had availed himself of such of the Hebrew Scriptures as had then been written. Whatever probabilities might

have been alleged in favor of these conjectures under the account which places the time of Zoroaster so late as the reign of Darius Hystaspis, disappear when he is placed, as we are constrained to place him, before the time of Cyrus, if not before the Hebrew captivity.

It is, then, affirmed, particularly by the Mohammedan writers, that Zoroaster was either a Jew, or that he went very early into Judæa, where he received his education under one of the prophets, with whom he lived as a servant, and, emulous of his master's glory, set up afterwards for a prophet on his own behalf. One account seems to apply to him the Scripture history of Gehazi, for it states that, having deceived and cheated the Hebrew prophet whom he served, his master prayed to God to smite him with leprosy, which accordingly took place. Another account, grafted on this, says that Zoroaster had, by his great skill in astrology, discovered that another prophet like unto Moses was to arise, whom all the world was to obey. This Old Testament prophecy, which we know applies to Christ, the Moslems apply to Mohammed; and it forms a reason for the peculiar enmity with which they treat the memory of Zoroaster, that he, as they allege, attempted to anticipate the mission of Mohammed, by setting up for himself a claim to be regarded as that prophet whose coming he had discovered. Under this notion he withdrew, the account states, into a cave; and, revolving these things in his mind, a light suddenly appeared, which was no other than an illusion of the devil, who, conversing with him out of the midst of the fire, Zoroaster no longer doubted that he had received his mission of prophecy, and forthwith commenced composing a book, containing a system of diabolical doctrine, which he called Zend. Having completed this performance, he left his retreat, and went about the world teaching his doctrines, and erecting temples for the sacred fire.

All these are idle tales, founded upon some parts of the known history of Zoroaster. We know that astrology could not have taught him what he is alleged to have discovered by its means; and even if it were for a moment admitted

that he did possess some knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, he is exonerated from opposing (like Mohammed) the essential principles of the antecedent revelation; and the most that could be said is, that he adopted so much of it, as he thought he could render acceptable to his countrymen. In point of fact, there is hardly anything new in the doctrinal part of his system; and these parts which seem to bear resemblance to Judaism, are no more than resemblances to those parts which the latter had in common with the primitive patriarchal religion. It seems, in fact, to have been the object of Zoroaster to exhibit a combination of all that he supposed to be good in the previous systems whether Patriarchal, or Sabæan, or Magian, purged of the more grossly idolatrous innovations of recent times. This system he produced, as having received it from the inspiration of heaven. Whether in this he was an impostor or not, it is hard to say. There are marks of sincerity about his writings—so far as extant—affording some countenance to the belief, that he really conceived himself divinely inspired, and that what he penned were divine oracles. That such a delusion was possible, we know—and the more possible in the case of a man who devoted many years of his life to solitary contemplation. That Zoroaster did withdraw from the haunts of men to a cave, is true; and that he there gave himself up to meditation and prayer, is acknowledged. But how long he remained in the cave, or how many books he wrote there, is not very certain. We are told, indeed, that he brought twelve volumes to the king, each composed of a hundred skins of vellum; but this is doubtless an exaggeration, although the fact, as stated, is less surprising than it may seem to the inexperienced. Even with our small written character, it often takes many pages of manuscript to make one page of print, and the ancient Persian character took up a good deal of room. It is to be remembered, also, that Zoroaster—who was certainly one of the most gifted men of his time—not only wrote down the principles of his religion, but also his own history, and the principles of most of the sciences then cultivated—in this and in some other respects reminding one of

Emmanuel Swedenborg, between whom and Zoroaster there seems to have been nearly as much resemblance as the difference of age and country rendered possible. Zoroaster met with wonderful success in establishing his religion, although not without considerable opposition from the upholders of the old idolatries, so that in the course of a few years it became paramount in Bactria, Media, and Persia. Balkh, in the former country, was made the head-quarters—the metropolitan city of the system ; and there Zoroaster fixed his residence, assuming himself the office of Archimagus, or high-priest, and spending his remaining days in teaching those who were to be the teachers of others. But his labors here were not of long duration, he having been slain, with all his priests, at Balkh, when that city was taken by storm by a fierce enemy of the Persian power.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN.—ISAIAH XLV. 5–7, 12.

After the account we have given of the career of Zoroaster, it is proper to consider the nature of the doctrines which he taught. To do this satisfactorily, in a small space, is rendered difficult from the nature of the documents in which the information comes down to us. But the following statement, so far as it goes, will, we apprehend, enable the reader to realize a correct and tolerably clear view of this religious system.

The leading doctrines which Zoroaster taught, were these :—

God, he strongly affirmed, was independent and self-existing from all eternity. This was well. This truth, through the great light which the Lord has given to us, has become so elementary and so simple, that we can hardly estimate aright the importance of its distinct announcement in any ancient system. Although to us so obvious, this truth had faded from the common knowledge of man since the patriarchal age, and to bring it forward thus conspicuously, was a great and crowning merit of the system of Zoroaster.

It was in trying to account for the origin of good and evil that Zoroaster began to stumble. There were, he taught, two principles in the universe—good and evil. The one was termed Ormuzd, which denotes the presiding agent of all that was good; and the other Ahriman, the lord of evil. Each of these had the power of creation: but that power was exercised with opposite designs; and it was from their co-action that a mixture of good and evil pervaded the universe, and was found in every creature. The angels of Ormuzd, or the good principle, sought to preserve the elements, the seasons, and the human race, which the infernal agents of Ahriman desired to destroy. But the source of good, the great Ormuzd, was alone everlasting; and must, therefore, ultimately prevail. If Christians, with all the light of Scripture irradiating the subject, still find in it much that is "hard to understand," it is not surprising that Zoroaster, who lacked this light, and was left to his own conjectures with the obscure intimations of tradition, involved himself in a dangerous and fatal error, dishonoring to God, which sets upon his system that stamp of human infirmity and failure which all these human inventions bear.

The uncareful reader may be apt to think that this Ahriman, or lord of evil, is no other than the Satan of Scripture. So it may have been intended. Or rather, in Ahriman the reference may have sought to embody, so far as Zoroaster understood them, the old patriarchal traditions concerning the great enemy of man. But there is a vast and awful difference. Ahriman is not like Satan, a creature of God, fallen from the high estate which he held once, and exercising his fearful ministry only through the advantage which the sin of man has given to him, and that only for an appointed time, and under the sufferance of One whose power could crush him in a moment. Ahriman, on the contrary, is not a creature, but a *principle*, co-ordinate with the author of good, equally with him possessing the power of creation, though differently exercised—waging with him an equal and doubtful conflict—and destined to be ultimately vanquished through an advantage on the part of his opponent, of which the system appears to have deprived himself, for no

other reason than that he might thereby be in the end overcome. Let us look at it again. What do we see here but essentially the old pervading vice of the system which may be regarded as next after the patriarchal—a barren recognition of the self-subsistence and eternity of God, but leaving Him in high and holy abstraction far apart, while the government of the world, its good and its evil, are left to great but inferior agents, who alone take an active part in the concerns of man? This is that fatal doctrine which lay at the root of all the ancient corruptions of religion, and in which, indeed, some of the most dangerous errors of Popery have had their origin. Under this view Ormuzd, as the author of good, is scarcely less objectionable than Ahriman, because he is thrust between man and the Almighty, and, indeed, stands before man in the place of God. It becomes, indeed, difficult to distinguish Ormuzd from the Almighty; and we know that in the popular religion the latter was altogether lost sight of, and Ormuzd exhibited as the sole object of worship. We can conceive, that in the days when this worship prevailed, a man might have travelled through the country, and, from what he saw and heard, would have gone away with the impression that Ormuzd was the god of the Persians, without having heard of the High and Inaccessible One, whom the theory of the religion made the head and centre of the system, but whom the practice of the system altogether overlooked. There are even state inscriptions, graven on stone of the time of Darius Hystaspis, in which everything is constantly described as being done "by the grace of Ormuzd," and in which no other spiritual existence is recognized. Then, light was the type of the good, darkness of the evil spirit; and God is represented as having said to Zoroaster, "My light is encircled under all that shines,"—beautiful words, true of the God whom we serve, and not true of any other power in heaven or earth. In fact, in the passage of Isaiah now before us, the Lord does, in the most direct and pointed manner, reprove these errors, and take to himself all the functions of creation, and government, and supreme control, of which it deprives

Him. With the information now given, the reader will not fail to perceive a strong and new emphasis in the words,—

> "I am the Lord, and there is none else,
> There is no God beside Me:
> I girded thee though thou hast not known Me:
> That they may know from the rising of the sun,
> And from the west, that there is none beside Me:
> I am the Lord, and there is none else."—Isaiah xlv. 5, 6.

This passage must have satisfied Cyrus that the being who made this claim, and whom he had before known only as the God of the Hebrews, could be no other than that High and Lofty One, the bare existence of whom was admitted by his own religion; and that He rejected the delegation of his active attributes in the government of the world, and the care of man, to Ormuzd or any one else—absolutely affirming that there was "none else" who exercised for Him, or instead of Him, his divine attributes. In the memorable confession, "He is the God," Cyrus seems to have recognized this truth, and acquainted us with the impression which these words made upon his mind. If this prophecy had left him in any doubt, the words that follow must have removed them, affirming, as they do, in express terms, that He was not only the Great One above all, but that He exercised without another all the functions ascribed to Ormuzd, and held supreme control over light and darkness, and good and evil. Nothing can be more explicit than these illustrious words:—

> "I form the light, and create darkness;
> I make peace, and create evil—
> I the Lord, do all these things.
> I have made the earth
> And created man upon it;
> I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens,
> And all their hosts have I commanded."—Isaiah xlv. 7, 12.

In connection with the last line, it may be remarked, that in Scripture "the host of heaven" denotes the heavenly bodies, which, as already explained, were the objects of worship under

the Sabæan superstition, the essential elements of which, purged of the grosser developments, were included in the system of Zoroaster, ennobled as that system was by many great truths, drawn from the knowledge of ancient times. The extraordinary honor paid to the sun under this system, and to fire as its symbol, would alone impart to it this taint. It has been seen that light was the type or symbol of Ormuzd, as darkness was of Ahriman. Hence the disciples of Zoroaster were directed, when they worshipped in a temple, to turn towards the sacred fire which was always kept burning there; and, when in the open air, to the sun as the great source of light, and that by which God sheds his vivifying influence upon the earth. This ended, as all such symbolical worship is sure in the long run to do, in direct worship being paid to the sun and to the fire by the great body of the followers of this religion, unmindful of the higher Object of reverence and worship whom the symbols were supposed to represent.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

RELIGIOUS PECULIARITIES.—ISAIAH XLVI. 1, 2, 6, 7.

It is not our object to develop the religious system of Zoroaster further than our present purpose renders necessary. We therefore abstain from any minute account of the ceremonies and institutions which were founded under his directions, or of the lesser tenets which his system embodied. Enough has been stated to show the particular object of the very pointed intimations, which the Scripture offers in the prophecies addressed to Cyrus. A little reflection will indeed show, that the Lord could not confer upon Cyrus the high honors which have been described, without, at the same time, protesting against the errors of his belief. It might else have been alleged that He had given a sort of sanction to these errors, by conferring such distinguishing notice upon a man by whom they were entertained, without a word of disapprobation or

correction. This cannot now be said; and we are called upon to admire the Divine wisdom by which this danger has been averted.

One or two points in the religious system of Zoroaster, may detain us for a moment before we dismiss the subject altogether.

In prescribing that worshippers should turn to the sun, and that fire might be worshipped, Zoroaster is held to have acted with a view of making his system acceptable to the people. These practices, however, were not introduced by him, but existed long before the earliest of the ages to which his existence has been referred. A notice of the worship of the sun and moon, which occurs in the early Scriptural Book of Job, has been already indicated. Another may be found in Ezekiel viii. 16, which shows that this kind of creature-worship was not only well known to the Jews, but that it was actually practised by them at the very temple before the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel, then a captive by the river Chebar, sees in a vision the abominations which are at that time in the course of being perpetrated at Jerusalem. After seeing these,—"the image of jealousy," the "chamber of imagery," and beholding the women "weeping for Tammuz" at the holy gate,—it is said to the prophet, "Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these." He turned accordingly, "and behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five-and-twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." To understand this clearly, it should be observed that, as if purposely to prevent this abomination, the entrance of the temple was on the east side of the building,—so that, in looking towards it in worship, the worshippers necessarily turned their backs upon the sun at his rising in the east, at which time the luminary was most usually worshipped. But the law of sun-worship required the face to be turned towards the sun at its rising; and the men seen by the prophet, being thus precluded from seeming to worship the Lord when

they really paid their homage to the sun, and being obliged to make their choice, chose to turn their backs upon the temple and their faces to the sun, rather than their backs to the sun and their faces to the temple.

We have seen how Zoroaster stumbled in the attempt to account for the existence of evil in the world; and as his system has, even from divines of high name, received a degree of praise which may mislead many minds, it may be well to show that he stumbled still more egregiously in laying down the process by which the sinful soul should become meet for heaven. In this respect his system seems inferior even to that of far grosser forms of idolatry. In most of these—as well as under the law of Moses—the institution of sacrifice, preserved from primitive tradition, proclaimed the insufficiency of man's best doings to establish his peace with God, avouched the conscious need of an expiatory victim, and shadowed forth, even to those who knew not its deeper meaning, the great atonement for sin which was, in the fulness of time, to be offered in the person of God's own beloved Son. Now, the religion of the Persians, as settled by Zoroaster, altogether dispensed with this important rite. Man was to work out his own salvation—to fight his battle against the evil within him and without him, as best he could, assisted by the grace of Ormuzd and the aid of his angels. Still it was felt that all this might leave the mind unsatisfied; and the resource provided was—the priest. The priest knew all—had studied all; he knew best what was to be done; and, as the commissioned servant of Ormuzd, had power with Heaven which others lacked. The unsatisfied soul might, therefore, resort to the priest; and if he were treated with becoming reverence and liberality, and if none of his just dues were withheld from him, there need be nothing more to fear; the priest would take it upon him to make all things right between the soul and God. Some young readers will say that we are describing Popery. It is even so. It is Popery; but it was not the less Magianism. This thrusting in of the priest as a person having authority, in the great concern between God and the soul of man, is the fatal plague

mark of every human invention in religion, in all countries and in every age. It was this insidious and interested principle that gave the Magian priesthood the great power and authority which they eventually acquired, and to which we may find, under the operation of the same principle, a very close parallel in the position occupied by the Papal priesthood.

In general we may observe, that in the Eastern systems which reject sacrifice—as in that of the Hindûs—men seek to make their peace with heaven by all kinds of bodily mortifications,—abstractions, fastings, tortures, deaths. It is to the credit of Zoroaster that he gave no sanction to such practices; and although he left the work of salvation to the man himself and to his priest, he taught that it was to be effected by acts of mercy, of brotherly love, and of public good. His views in this matter are illustrated in the curious parable which is thus given: "It is reported of Zerdusht, the author of our religion, that, one day retiring from the presence of God, he beheld a man plunged in Gehenna, his right foot only being free and sticking out. Zerdusht therefore cried,—'What is this that I behold? and why lieth the man in this condition?' He was answered,—'The man whom thou seest in this plight was formerly the lord of thirty-three cities, over which he reigned for many years without doing one good deed. Nothing but oppression, injustice, pride, and violence entered his mind. He was the scourge of multitudes; and without regarding their misery, he lived at ease in his palace. But one day as he was hunting, he beheld a sheep caught by the foot in a thicket, and thereby held at such a distance from food that it must have perished. On seeing this, a new and strange impulse of pity touched the king's mind. He alighted from his horse, released the sheep from the thicket, and led it to the pasture. It is for this act of tenderness and compassion that his foot remains out of Gehenna, although for the multitude of his sins, all the rest of his body is plunged therein. Endeavor, therefore, to do all the good thou canst without distrust or fear; for God is benign and merciful, and will reward richly the smallest good thou doest.'"

One of the good things of the system was the absolute and abhorrent rejection of every kind of image worship. This fact had probably some important influence upon the condition of the Jews while in subjection to the Persians; and may, among other circumstances, account for the very favorable treatment which the Hebrews received from the Persian monarchs. Among all the nations subject to their sway, they could find no other people who shared in their own hatred of idols, and who rejoiced in this distinction; and a broad sympathy in so great and notorious a matter as this, was far more likely, than almost anything else, to draw towards the Hebrew people the favorable notice of their Persian masters.

The prophecy of Isaiah respecting the future conquest of Babylon, so long before the event, exhibits the downfall of the Babylonian idols as a matter of triumph to the Jews to be accomplished by the conquerors. This as clearly indicated the Persians to be the destined conquerors, as if they had been directly named; for of all people, they alone, besides the Jews themselves, could feel any impulse to destroy the idols of Babylon. The words of the prophet are,—

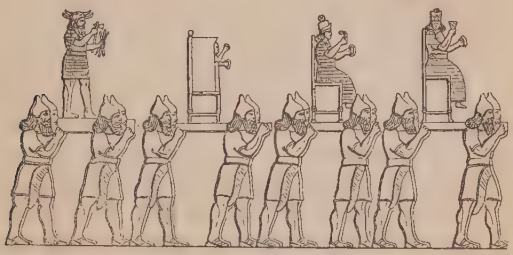
> "Bel boweth down; Nebo stoopeth;
> Their idols are laid upon the beasts and the cattle;
> What were borne by you are made into loads,
> A burden to the weary beast.
> They stoop, they bow down together;
> They are not able to deliver the burden;
> Yea themselves go into captivity."*—Isaiah xlvi. 1, 2.

The language here employed by the prophet is keenly sarcastic. The idolatrous images had formerly been carried about in grand procession; but now they should be broken to pieces, and carried away as ordinary luggage—as so much old metal—upon beasts of burden, which, sinking under the weight, would obtain no relief from the broken gods they carried. The fact that Cyrus thus disposed of the Chaldean idols is not recorded in history; but from what the Persians were in the

* Dr. Henderson's translation.

habit of doing in such cases, there is no question that the prophetic prediction was accomplished. Something of the kind is indeed manifested in the fact, that he despoiled the temple of Bel of the precious utensils which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, in order to restore them to the Jews.

There is no representation of anything of this sort among the ancient Persian sculptures; but in the Assyrian marbles we find a curiously proximate subject. It exhibits in a bas-relief, probably of the later Assyrian period, a procession of warriors, carrying on their shoulders four images. Layard is



doubtful whether these are the idols of a conquered people, borne in triumph by the conquerors, or whether the sculpture represents the commemoration of some religious ceremony. But he unconsciously adds the curiously illustrative remark,—"It may record an expedition against the revolted Babylonians, whose divinities, as described by Diodorus, can perhaps be identified with the figures in the bas-relief. The gods of the two cities, Nineveh and Babylon, were, there can be little doubt, nearly the same." Under the view which makes them conquered idols, as we believe them to be, this sculpture is strongly illustrative of the present text; under the other view, it becomes no less illustrative of Isaiah xlvi. 6, 7.

> "They lavish gold out of the bag
> And weigh silver in the balance;
> They hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god;
> They fall down, yea, they worship him;
> They bear him upon the shoulder, and they carry him;
> They set him in his place, and there he standeth."

SEVENTEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

HISTORICAL ELUCIDATIONS.—ISAIAH XLVI. 10.

Having now gone through those prophecies of Isaiah which derive illustration from the early history and character of Cyrus, and from the religious views of himself and his people, we may proceed to those which treat of his warlike undertakings and victories. But it seems previously necessary to point out how Cyrus became possessed of that imperial power which had before been possessed by the Medes; or rather, how the Median empire became merged in that of the Persians, who had been till then an inferior and subject people. Taken in the order of the Scripture books, this would most naturally connect itself with those passages of Daniel which intimate the actual transfer of power, but we rather introduce it here for the sake of giving some measure of historical connection to the subject which now engages our attention.

As the origination of the Persian empire in the person of Cyrus, is not a matter to which the prophets direct much attention, and as great space cannot here be afforded to it, we must be content to *indicate* what appears to us the right view of a matter involving some historical difficulties, without discussing the relative value of authorities, or entering more into the details of reasons and arguments, than may be absolutely necessary to make the matter intelligible. It will be perceived that this statement also involves an explanation of such of the difficulties of Babylonian history as are of any Scriptural connection or interest.

The real question is, whether the transfer of empire was effected by a civil war or by peaceful means. Herodotus declares that Cyrus incited the Persians to revolt against the rule of his mother's father, Astyages, king of Media, and having overcome him in battle, kept him prisoner in his palace till his death. Xenophon, however, says nothing of this war in his *Cyropædia*, but describes Astyages as dying, and as being succeeded by his son Cyaxares, who made his nephew Cyrus

commander-in-chief of the combined armies of Media and Persia, with which he achieved his first foreign victories in the name of his uncle, at whose death he, as his heir, took the sovereignty which, in all actual power, he had in fact enjoyed before. Yet in his more historical work, the *Anabasis*, this writer admits the civil war, which it did not suit the purposes of his romance to introduce. This great discrepancy being thus obviated, it becomes easy to reconcile the remaining difference by supposing that Herodotus being aware of the reality of the power, to which Cyrus then attained, did not think it necessary to embarrass his short statement with the account of the nominal authority which policy, no less than the respect due to his mother's brother, from whom he had received no injury, induced him to permit one, whose heir he was sure of becoming, to retain. That he really did so, as Xenophon states,—that as king of the Persians, whose real independence he had established by his victories over Astyages, he in foreign operations acted in alliance with, or in apparent submission to, his uncle —is clear from Scripture. The prophet Daniel, in interpreting the writing on the wall to Belshazzar, amplifies the word UPHARSIN (which means *division*) into "thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." What followed? "We are told that the same night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom, being about three score and ten years old." There is nothing here of Cyrus or the Persians. But presently, when the courtiers had entangled the king in the matter of Daniel, they urge upon him the necessity of acting according to the law of "the *Medes and Persians*, which altereth not." This is, we may remark by the way, one of those beautiful undesigned coincidences which continually meet the careful reader of the sacred Books, and by which they supply to every candid mind internal evidence of the most undoubted kind to their own truth. From all that appears in the historical statement, the Medes only and not the Persians, "took the kingdom" of Belshazzar: but from the second intimation, which is of the most incidental kind, we learn that the kingdom had become subject to the

law of the Medes *and Persians*, which points to the kind of connection between them, which secular history discloses; and presently after we see that Darius dies, and is succeeded at Babylon, as elsewhere, by Cyrus the Persian. All this becomes clear as day when we take "Darius the Mede," who is unknown by that name in common history, to be no other than that same Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus, with whom he acted, and whose forces, with those of Persia, were under his command. This is, indeed, now generally admitted; as Darius the Mede cannot be satisfactorily found in any other person than in Cyaxares the son of Astyages.

The relations of the Medes and Persians to the transactions in which Babylon is concerned, are important to the right understanding of many passages in Scripture history and prophecy; and they happen to be the earliest circumstances that arose under the settlement which has been described.

Originally Media and Babylonia had been equally subject to Assyria. The princes of these two realms, however, revolted, and established their own independence upon the ruins of the Assyrian Empire. There were then two contemporary kingdoms formed at first out of the dominions over which the Assyrians had ruled, but these were afterwards greatly extended; that of the Medes on the east of the Tigris, and that of the Babylonians on the west of the same river. Having a common origin, and the founders of the two kingdoms having been friends, the states assumed from the first amicable relations to each other, and strengthened them by matrimonial alliances. This was the easier, as their interests did not clash. Their respective careers of conquest and acquisition starting from nearly the same centre, took opposite directions; that of the Medes eastward towards Bactria and the Indus; that of the Babylonians westward towards the Mediterranean. Ultimately however, as time passed, consolidating the power of each state and erasing old associations, the two nations began to eye each other's greatness with jealousy, and causes of dispute failed not to arise between them. It is difficult to make out the case very distinctly; but as these differences had the effect of

bringing Cyrus and his Persians across the Tigris, we mus furnish the best account of the matter which existing materials allow.

It seems, then, that the experience and political sagacity of Nebuchadnezzar taught him the wisdom of maintaining peace with his Median neighbors, as the sole means of enabling him to pursue his own plans undisturbed. His power extended to the Mediterranean, and it seems for a time to have embraced Egypt; for in Ezekiel xxix. 18–20, the spoil of Egypt is promised to Nebuchadnezzar for his service against Tyre. Some have disputed this conquest of Egypt by the Babylonians, because it is not mentioned in history. But much history, which might have recorded it, is lost; and the Egyptian priests had sufficient reason to conceal the disgraceful fact from the Greek strangers, who, two centuries later, visited their country, and wrote the histories now extant. Besides the promises of God. even though we do *not know* of their fulfilment, are more certain than history. "Hath He said, and shall He not make it good?" If, therefore, God said by Ezekiel that He would give the spoil of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar, we know that He did so, even though history has not recorded the event. How long he exercised dominion there, is not certain. But the degree in which his attention must have been occupied with so distant and so valuable a possession while he had it, and of regaining it when it was lost, if it was lost in his life-time, may sufficiently account for is desire to keep on good terms with his neighbors east of the Tigris.

There is a tradition that during the years in which this great king lay under the judgment of God, and "was driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts of the field" (Daniel iv. 32), his son Evil-merodach, who acted as regent of the kingdom, contrived to embroil himself with the Medes, whereat Nebuchadnezzar, on his recovery, was so exceedingly wroth, that he cast his son into prison. It was in this prison, as Jewish traditions allege, that Evil merodach became acquainted with Jehoiachin, erewhile king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had kept many years in confinement, and whom,

on his accession to the throne, he released from his long bondage, and gave him a high place among the princes who sat at his table and frequented his court. Nebuchadnezzar not long surviving his restoration, Evil-merodach ascended from the prison to the throne, and forthwith resumed his designs against the Medes, whose growing power he dreaded, and formed a powerful confederacy against them. This brought Cyrus across the Tigris, as commander of the combined armies of the Medes and Persians. The latter were in number thirty thousand, and formed the force on which he chiefly relied. Not waiting for them in Babylon, Evil-merodach, more courageously than wisely, went forth to meet them and give them battle, and was defeated and slain, after a reign of less than three years. He was succeeded by his son (or, according to some accounts, his sister's husband) Neriglissar, the common accounts of whom are difficult to analyze. Hales and other careful inquirers into this perplexed subject, regard him as the Belshazzar of Scripture; and we are disposed to adopt that conclusion, not because it is free from difficulties, but because, upon the whole, it agrees better with Scripture than the conclusion advocated by some old interpreters, that Nabonadius (to be presently mentioned) was the same with Belshazzar. Neriglissar was killed by conspirators on the night of the impious feast; and not in consequence of the city being taken by the Persians, as is commonly stated. We are to refer that great transaction, the subject of magnificent prophecies, to a later time. Neriglissar or Belshazzar was then succeeded by his son, a boy named Laborosoarchod, whose short reign of nine months is passed over in Scripture (as it is in the canon of Ptolemy), and it is at once stated that "Darius the Mede took the kingdom." This, Hales contends, was by peaceable succession. By the death of Laborosoarchod, the reigning dynasty became extinct; and Cyaxares or Darius, as the brother of the queen-mother, and the next of kin by her side to the crown, had, according to the notions of that age, some pretensions to the succession, which, of whatever value, there was no opposing claim that could withstand. The recent victories of

the Medes and Persians gave them great power, and almost the rights of conquest; while the still recent indication of such a transfer by the prophet, in his interpretation of the handwriting on the wall, was calculated to give added weight to the claim of Darius, and would of itself have disarmed opposition had there been any strength to oppose. The terms in which the event is expressed, that "he took the kingdom," implies this form of succession, and is never used with reference to any succession by an act of war. It is analogous to the New Testament expression respecting "A certain king who went into a far country to *receive* for himself a kingdom." Let us add, that a claim growing out of that of his sister was not a weak one, for she was a famous woman, who had taken an active part in public affairs, and had done great things for the improvement of Babylon and the welfare of the inhabitants. Her name was Nitocris; and she appears to have been "the queen" who came in at the impious feast, in the midst of the consternation which the appearance of the handwriting on the wall occasioned, and directed the king's attention to the services and abilities of Daniel, who was thereupon summoned to give his interpretation of the dream. It was probably the same princess who introduced the prophet to the notice of her brother when "he took the kingdom," and by the report of his high qualities and services, obtained for him an introduction to the high favor which he enjoyed under that king.

It is worthy of observation that the character which history gives of Cyaxares is entirely in accordance with that which the Scripture assigns to Darius the Mede. Xenophon represents Cyaxares as weak and pliable, but of a cruel temper, easily managed for the most part, but ferocious in his anger; and this character would quite answer for Darius, who allowed his nobles to make laws for him and then repented; who suffered Daniel to be cast into the lion's den, and then spent a night in lamentation for him; and at last, in entire conformity with Xenophon's description, condemned to death not only his guileful counsellors, but also their wives and children.

This transaction could not fail greatly to increase the respect

and esteem in which Daniel was held by "Darius the Mede;" and it is impossible but that Cyrus himself must have become acquainted with the Hebrew statesman, and learned to estimate his high character and signal merits, *before* the death of his uncle left him unquestioned master of the united empire of the Medes and Persians. This enables us to apprehend that the influences had already begun to operate which eventually, in the very "*first* year of his reign," drew from Cyrus the memorable decree in behalf of the Jews.

The reader is aware that, in permitting such of the Hebrew exiles as thought proper to return to their own land, this great king gave the government of the province to Zerubbabel, their native prince, and heir to the throne of David. In respect of so weak and dependent a colony, there was little reason to apprehend that the prince would set up for himself or affect independence. But had his resources been greater, the same course would probably have been taken, as it was in accordance with the general policy of the Persians to appoint native princes to rule over the foreign provinces of the empire. Another instance of this, which has some concern with our immediate subject, occurs in the case of Babylon, the government of which was given to a native Chaldean prince called Nabonadius. This person, finding Cyrus much occupied in his western wars, ventured to assert his independence, and to take the title of king; and he was suffered for a time to remain undisturbed in his pretensions, as Cyrus had too much work on his hands to inflict at once the punishment destined for his rebellion.

As these foreign wars of Cyrus, and the ultimate overthrow of Nabonadius and capture of Babylon, are distinct subjects of Scripture prophecy, we shall next bestow upon these matters the attention they seem to require.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

THE NATIONS GIVEN TO CYRUS.—ISAIAH XLI.

We are now prepared to contemplate with advantage the prophecies of Isaiah which refer, with considerable minuteness, to the victorious career to which the great Cyrus was predestined. In the readings devoted to this great matter, we shall refer, first, to those prophecies which seem to us to bear upon some of this king's wars, the accounts of which are not usually resorted to for the illustration of Scripture, and then proceed to those which exhibit his agency in the downfall of Babylon.

Let it be borne in mind, that these very remarkable predictions of victories to be achieved by a favored hero, who had as yet no existence, are specially designed to afford Cyrus himself such signal evidence that all his steps had been guided by the Jehovah whom the Hebrews worshipped, that he should be constrained to acknowledge Him as the Lord of Heaven and earth, and as the source of all his power; and that, in the intensity of this conviction, he should be unable to resist the command laid upon him to restore the Jews to their own land, and promote the building of the temple in which the God, who had laden him with favors and prospered all his ways, might be duly worshipped.

Before quoting these passages, and illustrating more particularly the details which they offer, it is necessary to state generally, that a great confederacy against the Medes and Persians had been formed by the states of Asia west of the Tigris. It seems to have originated with the Babylonians, who succeeded in awakening the alarm of those states at the growing power of the Medo-Persian empire. It seems that great progress had been made in organizing this confederacy before Darius the Mede succeeded to the throne of Babylon, and the accession of power which was thereby acquired gave such increased alarm to the western kingdoms, as to render it necessary for Cyrus, after the government of Babylon had been settled in the hands of Nabonadius, to march to the north-west with all his hosts.

The Babylonians so hated the Persians, and were so entirely convinced that they would be unable to stand before the vast power arrayed against them, that the vice-king, as we have seen, disclaimed his dependence upon the Persians, and declared his adhesion to the confederacy, which he assisted to the extent of his resources.

There was at that time a great and formidable power in the west, which, to all human view, seemed fully equal to resist the Persians, and to overcome them in the strife of war. This was the Lydian empire, which was paramount in Asia-Minor; and whose king, Crœsus, was not only formidable by the extent of his dominion, and the tried valor of his troops, but by the resources which the possession of unbounded wealth placed at his command. In fact, Crœsus was the wealthiest king of that or any other age, so that "as rich as Crœsus" became among the ancients, and long remained, a proverb for large possessions. This mighty prince, at the head of a powerful confederacy, Cyrus met, and with greatly inferior forces overthrew; and as the result of that victory, and of the subsequent operations which were rendered comparatively easy by it, added the whole of Asia-Minor to his dominions, thereby completing the greatest empire the world had ever seen, extending in one direction from the Black Sea to the Nile, and the other, from the Mediterranean to the Indus.

It seems to be to the overthrow of this great and formidable confederacy that the Scripture prophecies of victory to Cyrus primarily refer, although most of them are, as far as we know, applicable also to the other great exploits in which he was engaged, but with respect to which our information is less precise.

In the forty-first chapter of Isaiah, the Almighty is sublimely introduced as demanding who it was that had raised up this great conqueror, this Cyrus, characterized as "the righteous man from the East?" who had "called him to His foot;" that is, had made him the instrument of the high purposes of His will? Who, the interrogation proceeds—

> "Gave the nations before him,
> And made him rule over kings?

He gave them as the dust to his sword,
And as the driven stubble to his bow.
He pursued them, and passed safely;
Even by the way he had not gone with his feet.
Who hath wrought and done it,
Calling the generations from the beginning?
I the Lord, the First,
And with the last: I am He."

This assertion of the instrumentality of Cyrus—of his being in a peculiar manner the child of the Lord's providence, is always thus emphatically produced, and gives the clue to his history.

The fact that the Persians had not before taken part in the affairs of the west; and, in particular, that Cyrus had not, is clearly pointed out in the lines which describe his westward march as one not previously known to his feet. In fact, he had to march so far to the west as the neighborhood of Sardis, before he was enabled to meet the enemy in full force and give him battle. This Sardis was the capital of the Lydian empire, and it seems to have been the policy of Crœsus to draw the Persian far away from his own resources, and into the district

where his own means were most available, before he gave him the opportunity of coming to a decisive action.

The extent of this victory, and its important consequences, are indicated by the largeness of the terms employed; not one nation, but many nations, not one king, but many kings, are

given "as the dust to his sword, and as the driven stubble to his bow."* Accordingly, the nations leagued against him on this occasion, and whom he subdued, were Lydians, Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, and all the nations of Asia-Minor; and, taken in a large sense, with reference to the final extension of his power, it embraced the Medes, Hyrcanians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Phœincians, and Babylonians. He ruled also, says Xenophon, "over the Bactrians, Indians, and Cilicians, as well as the Sacians, Paphlagonians, and Megadinians, and many other nations, whose names even one cannot enumerate. He ruled the Greeks that were settled in Asia; and, descending to the sea, the Cyprians and the Egyptians. These nations he ruled, though their languages differed from his own, and from each other; and yet was he enabled to extend the fear of himself over so great a part of the world, as to astonish all, so that no one dared to attempt anything against him." What can more strikingly illustrate the sacred prophecy than this statement of an ancient pagan writer; and how interesting it is to read history by the light which Scripture gives, and which, in this case, shows us WHO it was that "enabled" the Persian warrior thus to extend his power—thus to astonish the world—thus to make himself dreaded in many realms. Indeed, this dread of him is still more distinctly intimated in the verse following the one last quoted:

> "The isles saw it, and feared;
> The ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came."

Then follows a graphic and highly derisive account of the devotional operations of the idolatrous nations, to win the protection of their gods against the formidable invader:

* The cut, which forms an appropriate illustration, is from the remotely ancient sculptures of Persepolis, and represents one of the immediate successors of Cyrus seated on his throne, with the usual attendants and guards, while an ambassador appears before him. The throne is very remarkable, from its resemblance to the high-backed chairs formerly in vogue in this country, and the taste for which seems to be now reviving.

'They helped every one his neighbor;
And every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.
So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith,
And he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil,
Saying, It is ready for the soldering:
And he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved."

There can be little doubt, that much of this activity in god-making was induced by the knowledge that Cyrus and his Persians were no idolaters—were, indeed, destroyers of images, so that the nations threatened by their arms might hope to enlist in their defence the utmost sympathy and protection of the gods they served. But the God who held the right hand

of Cyrus, and gave to his conquering sword all the force it possessed, was mightier than they.*

But while the nations were to be in terror at the advance of

* The cut here offered is from the same source as the one just given. It represents the king walking, attended by two servants, one of whom bears an umbrella (which has always been an ensign of royalty in Persia), while the other bears in his right hand a fly-flapper, and in his left what is usually supposed the king's handkerchief. These illustrations derive their interest from the fact that the dresses, ornaments, utensils, as well as the customs indicated, all pertain to the age and country to which Cyrus belonged, and seem to bring him and his Persians visibly before us

Cyrus, the people of Israel are comforted by the assurance that they have nothing to fear in this, but rather much ground for satisfaction:

"But THOU, Israel my servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The seed of Abraham my friend—
Thou, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,
And called thee from the chief men thereof,
And said unto thee, Thou art my servant;
I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away:
Fear THOU not, for I am with thee:
Be not dismayed, for I am thy God:
I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The distinctive points of this beautiful passage, and of the similar assurances of comfort and safety which extend to the end of the chapter, will be the more intelligently apprehended if due emphasis is laid upon the personal pronouns.

Eighteenth Week.—Sunday.

THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY.—ISAIAH XLII. 9.

BY the mouth of Isaiah the Lord says: "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." This corresponds with other intimations, in which the Lord describes himself as declaring the end from the beginning, and as speaking of things that are not as though they were. But in the text we have selected for particular notice this day, the known fulfilment of past prophecies is connected with predictions of things to come. It is as much as to say, 'Now that things formerly predicted have come to pass, your confidence is the more imperatively demanded, that the future things now foretold shall in like manner be fulfilled, however improbable they

may appear, and although there is not yet visible any trace of the circumstances which may be expected to lead to them.'

The evidence of truth from the fulfilment of former prophecies, delivered by the individual prophet himself, or by others similarly commissioned and speaking in the same name, seemed in a great measure necessary to establish confidence in wavering minds, of the eventual fulfilment of prophecies relating to matters hidden in the distant future. A man who comes and tells us of things that are to happen when both the hearer and speaker will probably or certainly be no longer in the land of the living, must give us some evidence that he is entitled to our belief. There are two things to be established: first, That the prophecies of the Lord fail not of their fulfilment; and second, That the prophecies now uttered are from the Lord, and that he who delivers them is His recognized and commissioned servant.

The proof that the word of the Lord cannot be void, is easily afforded by a reference to the past generally; and there were indeed few of the prophets who could not refer to predictions uttered by themselves, which had speedily been fulfilled, and which, therefore, established at once the truth of their utterances, and authenticated their own commission. Isaiah could refer to many such—the most signal being the prediction that the kingdom of the Ten Tribes should cease before a child about to be born should "know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good;" the one respecting the frustration of the Assyrian king's designs, which was almost immediately fulfilled; and that respecting the recovery of Hezekiah in three days, and the prolongation of his life for fifteen years. A man who could point to these instances might with confidence claim credence for things so seemingly unlikely and remote, as the downfall of empires and the desolation of states then in their palmiest state, and the rise to greatness of nations scarcely known to exist; not to speak of those higher prophecies which launch forth into the wider space, and speak of Christ, his humiliation, his kingdom, and his glory.

This sort of evidence was of weight to the contemporaries of

the prophets; and, so far as they believed, was calculated to afford them encouraging glimpses through the rent veil of time. But to us it is far more important than to them, and the scope it embraces is more extensive. In fact, prophecy seems to be of more value for encouragement and strengthening to the living, than it was to the dead generations of men. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy, which was but scanty, in comparison, to the people whose ears drank in the very voices of the prophets, is most full and abundant to us, who can, in these later times, look back upon a vast body of prophecy already accomplished. This cannot be gainsaid. It cannot be questioned, that certain prophecies were delivered long anterior to the events to which they manifestly referred; and every man of common information has constantly before him, in this our day, real and tangible signs—positive evidence, that much that the prophets foretold has been fulfilled. "Much," but not all; simply because all prophecy—which extends forward to that day when the "mighty angel," standing upon the sea and upon the earth, shall lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by Him who liveth forever and ever, that "there shall be time no longer"—has not yet been accomplished.

To this paramount use of prophecy—in the future more than at the time of its delivery, and in the past rather than in the present—our Lord himself distinctly refers, when, after foreshowing his disciples the kind of life, so different from their calculations, that awaited them, he adds, "These things have I told you, that, when the time shall come, *ye may remember that I told you of them.*" John xvi. 4. When the circumstances he had foretold came to pass, the disciples would be encouraged and strengthened by the thought that these were not strange things, but parts of the plan which they were appointed, under the Divine Spirit, to carry out. They had been foreseen and foretold by Him, and therefore all that successively came to pass as he had foretold, became a new proof that all that He had spoken, all that they had believed, was indeed a truth, and no lie.

This kind of proof is the peculiar and essential characteris-

ter of the evidence from prophecy, and in no slight degree contributes to its singular efficacy in gaining on our minds, convincing our judgments, and influencing our opinions, in removing our doubts, and strengthening our faith; and thus becomes a most effectual instrument in advocating the cause, and in confirming the truth and certainty, of the religion of the Bible. Its power in this respect has been often tested. It is, for instance, authentically recorded, that more than one unbelieving soul has been overcome, convinced, converted, by comparing the prophecy concerning the death and sufferings of Christ, contained in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, with its exact fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth.

If we consider it well, we find the evidence from prophecy, and its convincing power, stronger, or at least more enduring, than that of miracle. The evidence of miracle is designed to operate chiefly for the immediate and powerful conviction of those who are the contemporaries of him by whom the miracle is wrought, and comes to after-ages in the fainter and reflected light of testimony, that such things were done. Prophecy is, in the moment of utterance, less forcibly convincing as a proof of the truth, and a test of the Divine will and interference unless in the instances of immediate fulfilment, in which case it partakes of the nature of a miracle, as when Moses predicted the fate of Korah and his rebellious company. "Like wine, prophecy improves by age, and acquires with it not only ripeness and maturity, but strength and excellence. Time, which wears out and destroys almost everything else, only contributes to stamp the value, and to augment the influence and benefits, of prophecy; it is, therefore, from this circumstance alone, possessed of amazing powers; it is a motion continually accelerated; it is a weight perpetually descending, and therefore continually increasing its force and impulse as it descends. It is the cone, weak and narrow perhaps at top, but insensibly and incessantly enlarging itself, till it becomes a vast and solid mass, immense in weight and bulk, and irresistible in force and effect." *

This quality of prophecy imposes upon us a high and solemn

* WHITNEY, *Scheme and Completion of Prophecy*, 1883.

responsibility with regard to it, far greater than lay upon those to whom the prophecies were in the first instance given We see more, we know more; the evidence is placed before us with accumulated force. If, therefore, they who saw but the commencing links of the mighty chain of evidences which prophecy offers, were not held guiltless for neglecting its intimations, of how much sorer punishment shall we be deemed worthy, who stand in the flood of light from its widening ray, if we neglect it, if we suffer ourselves to doubt in presence of it—if we fail to avail ourselves to the utmost of the ample means of strengthening and refreshing, which it in these hastening ages offers!

In this point of view, how solemnly come the words of the Apostle: "We have also the more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

EIGHTEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

CRŒSUS.—ISAIAH XLIV. 23,–XLV. 3.

We may now return to the prophecies contained in the forty-fourth and forty-fifth chapters, which it is necessary to cite at some length.

"Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it:
Shout, ye lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, ye mountains,
Thou forest, and every tree therein!
For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob,
And glorified himself in Israel.
Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer,
And He that formed thee from the womb,
I am the Lord, that maketh all things;
That stretcheth forth the heavens alone;
That spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;
That frustrateth the tokens of the liars,
That maketh the diviners mad;
That turneth wise men backward,
And maketh their knowledge foolish;

That confirmeth the word of His servant,
And performeth the counsel of His messengers;
That saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited;
And to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built,
And I will raise up the decayed places thereof:
That saith to the deep, Be dry,
And, I will dry up thy rivers:
That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,
And shall perform all my pleasure;
Even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;
And to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.
Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
Whose right hand I have holden,
To subdue nations before him;
And I will loose the loins of kings,
To open before him the two-leaved gates;
And the gates shall not be shut:
I will go before thee,
And make the crooked places straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
And cut in sunder the bars of iron.
I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
And the hidden riches of secret places;
That thou mayest know that I, the Lord,
Which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.'

In this passage we may select for remark a few points which have not already engaged our attention, or which it may not be necessary to reserve for notice in connection with the taking of Babylon, to which some of the terms employed have been supposed to refer.

With regard to the verse which refers pointedly to the futility of the lying oracles and divinations on which the enemies of Cyrus relied, it very forcibly brings to mind the extreme solicitude manifested, by Crœsus, to ascertain the result of his enterprise against Cyrus, before he entered upon it. He sent to consult the famous oracle at Delphi, and the response was, that if he crossed the river Halys he would destroy a great empire. Nothing doubting that this empire was that of the Persians, he did cross the Halys, and by that act commenced the war which ended in his ruin. He afterwards sent to re-

proach the oracle for deceiving him; but the answer was, that an empire had been lost by his crossing the Halys—his own empire, and the oracle had been fulfilled; and that he alone had been wrong in his interpretation. Nothing could more clearly evince the true nature of these lying oracles, which were generally of this ambiguous character, and might be interpreted either way as circumstances turned out. There can be no question that, in this case, had the result been different, the interpretation of Crœsus would have been accepted as the true one, and would have been cited in proof of the verity of the oracle.

The words, "That turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish," may remind us that Crœsus was a patron of philosophers and wise men, who found much welcome at his court; and that the king himself made some pretension to wisdom, although it would appear by the result, that he profited very little by the opportunities which he enjoyed, of acquiring what was in that age considered the highest wisdom. Among those who visited his court was the famous philosophor Solon, whom the king received with great attention and respect. He was then at the height of his glory and greatness, and, like Nebuchadnezzar, had no mean opinion of the position he had attained. He showed the philosopher all his immense and curious treasures; and anxious to ascertain the impression which the display had made, he, with affected carelessness, asked him, whom he conceived to be the most fortunate man he had ever known. Greatly to his mortification, Solon seemed not to think of him at all; but named, first, Tellus, who was slain in fighting victoriously for his country; then, Cleobis and Biton, who had died suddenly in the temple after having given a signal manifestation of their filial piety. Hearing this, the king, to bring him to the point, asked bluntly: "What, then, do you think of me?" The reply was full of deep import: "I pronounce no man happy before his death." His meaning was, apparently, that the vicissitudes of life are so frequent and so great, that no man can be pronounced happy till we see the end—till he ceases to be subject to the contin-

gencies of life, and has ended it with honor. This was a high view, according to the notions among the heathen of that age; but it would be a low one to those who know that they are born of God, and whom the privileges of that new birth have brought to a state of prosperity and blessedness which no vicissitudes of life can alter, nor any circumstances of death disturb.*

Crœsus was far from being pleased at this plain dealing of Solon, and he had not even the magnanimity to conceal his displeasure. He dismissed him with contempt, as one utterly unacquainted with the world. But the weighty words sunk deep into his mind; and when his beloved son Atys was soon after slain in chasing the wild boar, he had occasion to feel their truth. Another occasion occurred when his army was defeated, his great city of Sardis taken, his vast treasures the prey of the conqueror, and himself a prisoner doomed to death. In fact, the remembrance of Solon's words struck him so forcibly, as he was led forth to his death, that he thrice repeated his name so loudly as to attract the attention of Cyrus. The conqueror then, through an interpreter, required to know the subject of his exclamation. He told him of Solon's visit, and of his words. The Persian was so much impressed by this striking instance of the mutabilities of life which the philosopher had in view, that his heart was softened. He forbore his vengeful intention, and admitted Crœsus to some degree of his favor. He allowed him to retain his kingly title, and assigned him some territory for his support; but he took care to keep him continually near his person, and forbore not to

* See this conversation very fully reported in Herodotus (i. 30–34). It is usually received as authentic; but we find that Sir W. Drummond, in his *Origines*, book vii. chap. 7, disbelieves its being founded on fact,—there being chronological difficulties in the way of the alleged interview between Solon and Crœsus. The difficulties are not clearly enough stated for investigation; and as Sir William confesses, that "it is painful to have doubts where others believe," we should not advise the rejection of this anecdote, on any evidence that has yet been produced against it.

possess himself of all the treasures in which Crœsus had placed his hope.

The passage in the sacred text which has been quoted:

> "I will go before thee,
> And make the crooked places straight:
> I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
> And cut in sunder the bars of iron:"

describes vividly the manner in which all obstacles gave way before him in his difficult march, under the guidance of ONE who had given him a great work to do, and who upheld his hand till it was accomplished. It also indicates the marvellous facility with which the strongest cities were taken by the Persians, a people whose force consisted chiefly in cavalry, and who never, in all their history, excelled in the taking of fortified places. Yet there never was a conqueror whose triumphant course was less obstructed by delay in the taking of towns. In many cases a sort of mysterious terror, which, as prophesied, invested his name, and went before him, so disheartened the garrisons, that the gates of the towns to which he came were opened without opposition on his approach. In other cases some unexpected stratagems put the strongest places, with very little delay, in his possession. Cyrus, indeed, beyond most generals of ancient times, was fertile in stratagems of war. No fewer than ten of his remarkable operations of this kind, all attended with important results, are recited by Polyænus in his *Stratagemata*. In one way and another the result was, as we have stated, and, without doubt, the distinct prediction by Isaiah, of a matter so much beyond the range of common experience, must have had great weight upon the mind of Cyrus, in convincing him not only that the prophecy was true, but the Divine Author of that prophecy was He who had ir. ced made straight his path before him, and who had opened to him the two-leaved gates of the numerous strong cities which he had won.

EIGHTEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

SIEGE OF SARDIS.—ISAIAH XLIV. 23–XLV. 3.

THE two greatest cities taken by Cyrus were Sardis and Babylon, and of their reduction we have more particular accounts than of any others, and both of them were taken by stratagem. The capture of Babylon is alone directly mentioned in Scripture, and will demand particular notice. But although Sardis is not named, we have little doubt that some of the operations against it are alluded to in the general prediction of the triumphs of Cyrus; for which reason, as well as because there are various remarkable particulars in this siege and the battle preceding it, which give a clear idea of the ancient oriental military operations alluded to by the prophets, we think it well to give one evening to this matter. It will be perceived that some of the military proceedings derive much illustration from the Assyrian sculptures, and the information which we have lately furnished in connection with them; the more valuable, as the ancient Persian sculptures afford no representations of battles or sieges.

After a long march, Cyrus, as already hinted, came in front of the confederated army at Thybarra in Lydia, not far from Sardis, the capital of that country. His army was 196,000 strong, horse and foot, besides which he had three hundred of those "iron chariots" of war, so often mentioned in Scripture, and which were very formidable in those times. They were armed with projecting scythes, which cut the adverse soldiers to pieces in a most cruel manner wherever the chariots were driven. The only effectual way of dealing with them was to render them useless for the time by slaying the horses by which they were drawn. But to prevent this, the horses of the Persian chariots, four abreast in each, were covered with trappings that were proof against all missile weapons. The Persian army had also a large number of other chariots, or rather wains of large size, each drawn by sixteen oxen, upon each of which was a kind of tower, eighteen or twenty feet high; and in

each tower were lodged twenty archers. These towers, which must have been of wood, could not but give a most curious appearance to an advancing army. As they went with the army, they were designed for service in action, rather than in sieges, for which a different and more substantial kind of tower was required; and their use seems to have been to enable the marksmen, from their elevated station, to "pick off" the most distinguished of the enemy, as well as to furnish a centre of resistance around which the troops might form or rally, if momentarily broken or driven back. There was, moreover, in the Persian army a considerable number of camels, each mounted by two Arabian archers, the one looking towards the head and the other towards the tail of the animal.

The army of Crœsus was twice as numerous as that of Cyrus, consisting of no fewer than 420,000 men. Both armies were drawn up in an immense plain, which gave room for extending their wings to the right and left. The design of Crœsus, upon which he placed his chief reliance, was to avail himself of his larger numbers by surrounding or hemming in the Persian army. The main strength of his army lay in the Egyptian auxiliaries, who alone numbered 120,000 men of tried valor; and these were wisely placed in the centre. When the two armies were in sight of each other, Crœsus, perceiving how much his front exceeded that of the Persians, made his centre halt and the wings to advance, with the design to enclose the enemy, and begin the attack on three sides at the same time. When the two wings were sufficiently extended, Crœsus gave the signal for the main body to advance, on which it marched up to the front of the Persian host, the attack upon which was thus commenced on the front and both flanks at once. This great manœuvre, which seems to have been pretty well executed, certainly presented a very threatening aspect to the Persians, considering the great disparity of numbers. But Cyrus was by no means alarmed. He signalled his troops to face about, and was thus enabled to take in flank the enemy's forces that were marching to fall upon his rear, and soon put them into great disorder. At the same moment a squadron of

camels was made to march against the other wing of the enemy, which consisted almost wholly of cavalry; their horses were, as the experience of Cyrus had taught him to reckon upon, so much alarmed at the advance of so large a body of camels, that they became unmanageable, threw their riders, and trod them under foot, thus occasioning great confusion in that quarter; and while they were in this disorder, a Persian officer of great experience, named Artagersas, at the head of a small body of horse, charged them so vigorously, that they could never afterwards rally; and the chariots armed with scythes being at the same time driven furiously among them, the rout was on that side complete. Both the wings of the enemy being thus broken and dispersed, Cyrus gave orders to Abradatas, his chief favorite, to fall upon the centre with the chariots. The first ranks consisted mostly of Lydians, and gave way before the violence of the charge; but the Egyptians, being covered with their bucklers, and marching so close that the chariots* had not room to penetrate their ranks, stood their ground. A great slaughter of the Persians ensued. Abradatas himself was killed, his chariot overturned, and most of his men cut in pieces. Upon this, the Egyptians boldly advanced, and compelled the Persian infantry to give way, driving them back quite to their engines. Here they were met by a shower of arrows and javelins discharged from the towers; and at the same time the Persian rear, advancing sword in hand, compelled the retreating archers and spearmen to return to the charge.

By this time Cyrus having put to route both the horse and foot on the left of the Egyptians, pushed on the centre, where he had the mortification of seeing his Persians again giving

* This account, from the Greek authorities, of the conduct of the Egyptians at the battle of Thybarra, tallies exactly with some of the modes of Egyptian military action represented in the sculptures and paintings of ancient Egypt. The Egyptian shield was of an oblong square figure; which shape seems to have been given them for the very purpose of enabling the soldiers by their junction to form a roof overhead (testudo.) or as on this occasion, a wall in front.

ground. Judging that the only way of arresting the Egyptians from pressing their advantage was to attack them in the rear, he did so; and the Persian cavalry at the same time coming up to his assistance, the fight was renewed with great slaughter on both sides, for the Egyptians finding themselves thus attacked in the rear, faced about, and defended themselves with incredible bravery. Cyrus himself was in great danger; for his horse being killed under him, he fell into the midst of his enemies. But his appointed work, as the punisher of Babylon and the deliverer of the Jews, was not yet accomplished, and, although he knew it not, his life was safe until that work was done. He was saved by his Persians, who, alarmed at his danger, threw themselves headlong upon those that surrounded their fallen king, and succeeded in preserving him from their hands. The battle then became more bloody than ever. But at length Cyrus, admiring the valor of the Egyptians, and concerned to see so many brave men perish, offered them honorable conditions, at the same time letting them know that they were entirely unsupported, all their allies having abandoned the field. On this they accepted the terms offered; and having stipulated that they should not be employed against Crœsus, in whose service they had been engaged, they surrendered to the conqueror, and from that time served him with great fidelity and zeal.

This engagement lasted till night. The allies dispersed from the field of battle to their several countries; and Crœsus with his native Lydians withdrew into Sardis. Cyrus made no attempt to pursue the fugitives, but the next day he marched with all his forces against the city. Crœsus, who wanted not for valor, thought himself still able to meet the Persians in battle; and he therefore marched out to encounter them at the head of his native troops. As this force consisted mostly of cavalry, Cyrus confronted them with his camels, and the horses being unable to endure the sight and smell of so huge a body of these animals, were thrown into disorder. But the Lydians dismounting, fought on foot. They kept their ground very obstinately for some time; but at last, finding themselves

overmatched, were forced to make their retreat into Sardis, which was immediately invested by the Persians. To reduce a place so strong, so well provisioned, and so bravely garrisoned, threatened to be a work of time; indeed, as Crœsus trusted, of so much time, as would enable him to obtain assistance from Greece. Yet the place was almost immediately taken, and that almost without the exchange of blows, by the operation of two stratagems of war, one of which seems very odd, and the other we should call not humane or moral, did we not remember that humanity or morality are things not much belonging to the trade of war in *any* age or country, and certainly not to such wars as the ancients waged.

The first stratagem is thus related:—"At the siege of Sardis, Cyrus constructed machines of wood that were as high as the walls, and placed upon them images dressed up like Persians, with beards on their faces, quivers on their shoulders, and bows in their hands. These were advanced during the night close to the walls, so that the figures rose above the fort. Early in the morning Cyrus caused an attack to be made in a different quarter, to the defence of which the whole force of the town was immediately directed. The images in the opposite quarter rising above the wall, and seeming in the distance to be actually upon it, being then accidentally discovered, a great cry arose, and there was a general panic, in the belief that the besiegers had got possession of the place. Throwing open the gates, every one made his escape in the best manner he could; and Cyrus became master of Sardis at discretion."

The other is this: After Cyrus had made himself master of Sardis, and Crœsus still held out in the fort in expectation of assistance from Greece, he ordered the Sardian prisoners, the friends and relations of the besieged, to be bound and displayed before them. A herald, at the same time, proclaimed that if the fort were surrendered to Cyrus, they should receive their relations safe and without ransom; but if they persisted in holding it out against him, he would hang up every one of them before their eyes. To save their friends, therefore, they chose rather to give up the for than await the issue of those

precarious hopes, with which Crœsus had flattered himself, of assistance from the states of Greece.

In this connection, we must not overlook the lines :—

> "I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
> And hidden riches of secret places."

This is certainly a distinct allusion to the immense wealth which Cyrus was to derive from his conquests, and which were such as no other conqueror ever realized. Not only did he acquire the immense riches of Babylon, as distinctly promised by Jeremiah (l. 37); but the treasure which Crœsus delivered up to him is reckoned to have been equal to the enormous sum of £126,224,000 sterling. The highest calculation of the wealth which Nadir Shah derived from the spoils of India scarcely exceeded half this amount, while some accounts reduce it to a quarter.

The second of these lines clearly alludes to the Oriental practice of hiding treasure in secret places, in the absence of such means of secure deposit or investment as we possess, which custom we shall hereafter find an opportunity of fully elucidating.

EIGHTEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

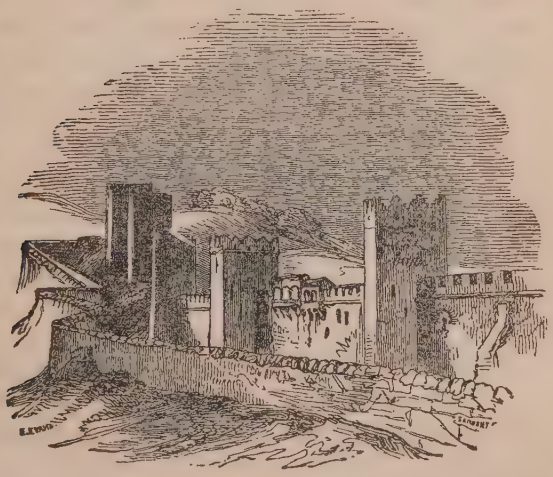
THE BURDEN OF BABYLON.—ISAIAH XIII.

We now come to the prophecies which have regard to the capture of Babylon by the Persians under Cyrus This great subject of prophecy is again and again taken up by Isaiah, and re-appears at intervals from near the commencement to near the close of his book. It will therefore now be necessary, in order to bring this into its place, as the crowning act of the great king's career, to look at these passages collectively, without regard to the position they severally occupy in the book. It is well that our plan necessarily does not confine us to the chapters, but allows us to make such an arrangement of our own as may seem most expedient, when, as in this case, it is

desirable to preserve the thread which the history of an individual, as involved in these prophecies, presents. The occasion is rare, and needs this special treatment.

We will first give the account of this great transaction as it appears in the statements of ancient historians, and then we shall return to the prophecies.

The breaking up of the great confederacy against the Medo-Persian power, which Crœsus had organized, at length left Cyrus free to march against Babylon, where the self-created king, Nabonadius, had, in the lapse of time, greatly strengthened his power. This personage no sooner heard of the advance of the Persians, than he marched forth against them with a large army; but he was beaten with considerable loss, and was constrained to retreat behind the walls of the town. Having suitably stationed his forces, Cyrus delayed not to take a deliberate survey of the defences of the city, around which he rode slowly, attended by his principal friends and allies. He at once saw that its reduction would be no easy



enterprise. The walls were of prodigious height and thickness; the number of men to defend them was very great; and, in ordinary circumstances, the only mode of reducing the place

would have been by cutting off its communications with the country, and so starving it into a surrender.. But in anticipation of this, Nabonadius had taken immense pains to store the town with provisions, and it was reckoned to contain enough to sustain the inhabitants for twenty years—the rather, as the vast area of the city contained large and numerous gardens, in which no small quantities of vegetable produce might be raised. Cyrus, however, conceived that his only course was to cut off all the communications with the country; and to manifest every sign of a determination not to abandon the enterprise till the city had fallen into his hands, he caused a line of circumvallation to be drawn around it, with a large and deep ditch, and upon the banks thrown up in excavating it, he built towers at regular intervals, as watch-towers and stations for the troops on guard. It is doubtful whether he then knew that the city was too well provisioned for him to hope to starve it into a surrender. One would think that he could scarcely be ignorant of this fact; and although Xenophon declares that he did expect to reduce the place by famine, he assigns other reasons, which are sufficient to account for these laborious works, even in the supposition that he did know how well the city was provisioned. These are, that he from the first contemplated the use to which these trenches were eventually made subservient; and that, by the construction of this impassable barrier, he might relieve his troops from the fatigue of constantly guarding in full force so immense a circumference. Accordingly, no sooner were the works completed than the army was divided into twelve sections, each of which was, during the year, to guard the works in monthly rotation. It is interesting to recognize here the very same principle of rotatory divisional service which David had ages before introduced into the sacred services of the tabernacle, and which his son Solomon also introduced into the civil and military employments.

The Babylonians professed themselves to be mightily diverted by these proceedings, which they overwhelmed with derisive and taunting insults from the walls, believing themselves to be quite

secure from military action by the strength and loftiness of their walls, and beyond all danger of famine by the immense stores which had been laid up. After nearly two years had been thus consumed in these proceedings—which was, however, but a short time when the ordinary character of ancient sieges is considered—Cyrus heard that a great nocturnal festival of the Babylonians approached, in which the inhabitants were certain to spend the whole night in drunkenness and debauchery; to which, it seems, they were much addicted, and an instance of which occurs in the Book of Daniel, in the account of Belshazzar's feast. There is nothing among the scanty existing memorials of Babylon that might illustrate this; but the Assyrian

sculptures present us with a remarkable banqueting scene, in which the guests are seated four at each table, on high stools or couches, while the servants take wine from a large vase or tub, and carry it in small pails to the guests, who are seen to hold up their cups, as if drinking health to each other. Music is not wanting, the instruments being a kind of many-stringed lyre, with a square body and upright sides.

This festival seemed to Cyrus to offer him a suitable occasion of putting into execution the plan which he had probably preconceived. It must be understood that the river Euphrates flowed through the midst of Babylon, and its banks were lined with walls, pierced with many gates, which afforded access to

the city. The river then, as at present, overflowed all its banks in the early spring—not so much from rain, as from the melting of the snows in the regions which it traverses in its upper course. The inundation is then, in some seasons, so redundant as to prove very injurious to the buildings near the river. To avert such consequences, advantage had been taken of a spacious natural depression of the soil at some distance above Babylon, which had been artificially deepened in part, so as to form a vast reservoir, into which the waters of the river could on occasion be turned, by means of a broad canal, so as for a time almost to exhaust the stream. This great basin, which in its ordinary aspect was a morass, then became a large lake, not less, it is said, than fifty miles in circuit. Now, on this important night, Cyrus sent up a strong detachment to the head of the canal leading to this lake, with orders at a given time, to break down the great bank or dam that was between the lake and the canal, and so turn the whole current of the river into the lake. At the same time, he stationed one body of troops at the point where the river entered the city, and another where it came out, ordering them to march in by the exhausted channel, as soon as they should find it fordable. Towards the evening, he also opened the head of the trenches on both sides of the river above the city, that the water might discharge itself into them, by which means, and the breaking down of the great dam, the waters in this part of the river were soon exhausted. The two bodies of troops then, according to the orders they had received, marched into the bed of the river, the water reaching no higher than their knees. The gates towards the river, from which quarter no one suspected danger, had been left open, amid the riot and disorder of that night, so that the Persians were enabled to penetrate, without opposition, to the very heart of the city. The two parties met, according to agreement, at the palace, where they surprised the guards, and cut them in pieces. Those who were in the palace opening the gates to learn the cause of this confusion, so unsuited to the festive night, the Persians rushed in, took the palace, and slew the king, who came out to meet them sword in hand.

Cyrus then sent bodies of horse through the city, to clear the streets, and to proclaim to the inhabitants that they were to keep within doors, on pain of death. The next day, those who held the forts perceiving that the city was in fact taken, and that the king was dead, gave up the strongholds, of which Cyrus immediately took possession, and garrisoned them with his own troops. It was then proclaimed by the heralds throughout the city, that all the inhabitants who possessed arms, were to bring them forth and deliver them up, and that the inhabitants of any house in which arms were afterwards found should be put to death. The order was obeyed. And thus the great city, so strongly fortified, so rich, so populous, and so abundantly provisioned, fell, almost without a blow, into the hands of the Persians.

It will be seen that there were many special and singular incidents in this siege. It is one, to the description of which no vague generalities could be applicable. It is, therefore, well calculated to strengthen any wavering faith in the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament—to point out how exactly the most minute and remarkable incidents of this transaction were foretold, long before their occurrence, by more than one prophet of the Lord. The coincidences are so striking, that when Cyrus was informed of these prophecies, so soon after the event, and had the means of satisfying himself that they had been for a long time in existence, he could not, without wilful obduracy of heart, resist the conviction they were designed to produce, and which drew from him the memorable acknowldgement to which we have repeatedly referred.

EIGHTEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

GOLD DISREGARDED.—ISAIAH XIII. 17.

HAVING considered the historical details of the conquest of Babylon, we are now in an advantageous position for contemplating the prophecies which refer to the subject; and as we

shall be obliged to cite, for the sake of the connection, something more than the immediate purpose requires, we commence with the thirteenth chapter, where this great matter is first introduced.

1 "The Burden of Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.
2 Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain;
Exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand,
That they may go into the gate of the nobles.
3 I have commanded my sanctified ones,
I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger,
Even them that rejoice in my highness.

4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains as of a great people:
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together:
The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.
5 They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven;—
Even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation,
To destroy the whole land.

6 Howl ye! for the day of the Lord is at hand,
It shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.
7 Therefore shall all hands be faint,
And every man's heart shall melt:
8 And they shall be afraid;
Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them;
They shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth:
They shall be amazed one at another;
Their faces shall be as flames.

9 Behold the day of the Lord cometh,
Cruel both with wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate,
And he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
10 For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof,
Shall not give their light.
The sun shall be darkened in his going forth,
And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.
11 And I will punish the world for their evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
And I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease;
And I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold;
Even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.
13 Therefore I will shake the heaven,

And the earth shall remove out of her place,
In the wrath of the Lord of hosts,
And in the day of his fierce anger.
14 And it [Babylon] shall be as the chased roe,
And as a sheep that no man taketh up;
They shall every man turn to his own people,
And flee every one into his own land.
15 Every one that is overtaken shall be thrust through;
And every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.
16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
Their houses shall be spoiled and their wives ravished.

17 Behold also I will stir up the Medes against them,
Who shall not regard silver;
And as for gold, they shall not delight in it.
8 Their bows also shall dash the young men in pieces;
And they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb;
Their eye shall not spare [even] children.
19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,
Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

The sequel of the chapter goes on to illustrate by many striking and beautiful images the state of desolation to which Babylon should be eventually reduced, and in which, accordingly, she now lies.

The passage we have quoted is less specific in its allusions to the siege by Cyrus than some of those that follow, and, like the others, it extends its view so as to comprehend a subsequent and more ruinous siege by Darius Hystaspis, and to the desolation which a long series of disasters would in the course of time produce.

It is seen that the prophecy here opens very grandly. The prophet, in his vision, first hears the voice of the Almighty addressed to the nations, as subject to Him, and commanding them to raise the standard of war, and to gather around it the mighty armies, of various nations and tongues, which were to be employed against the doomed city. This summons is expressed very emphatically—by exalting the standard, beckoning with the hand, calling with the voice. Then still more emphatically the Lord declares that He has himself called to this great work

the Persian host—"his sanctified ones"—as being set apart or consecrated for this duty—mighty to execute his wrath—exulting in the great plan they are appointed to accomplish.

In the fourth verse we see clearly that this host was to be composed of numerous and diverse nations, which was eminently true of the host which Cyrus brought from the conquest of the west, and in which he had incorporated troops from many different countries. Xenophon, in his account of the siege, incidentally names Phrygians, Lydians, Arabians, and Cappadocians, as among other foreigners who served on this occasion in the army of the Persians. And then, as a climax, we learn that it is the Lord of hosts himself who takes the command of this great army and musters its hosts to battle.

Then (verse 5) we are told more distinctly that these troops came from distant parts. To this it has been objected that Media and Persia, so far from being distant with respect to Babylonia, were the very next countries to it. But it is overlooked that the army contained, as just stated, large bodies of men from almost the remotest parts westward and (it will presently appear) northward, with which the Babylonians were acquainted; and it is far from unlikely that the original Persian army contained many troops from Bactria, which was a very remote country with respect to Babylon. Besides, if understood only of the Medes and Persians, it is clear that, although neighbors, they advanced against Babylon after having been far away engaged in the conquest of remote countries.

The sequel affords a lively picture of the consternation and alarm of a people suddenly abandoning all hope and giving themselves up to despair; and we know from the result that this must have been the case when, in the height of their fancied security, and in the midst of their festivities, they found the city in the hands of the Persians. Nothing can evince this more clearly than the fact, that no defence or resistance was attempted. This circumstance is beautifully amplified in verse 14 by the images of the chased roe and of the shepherdless sheep.

There seems in the remaining verses we have quoted a transition of ideas—representing two actions as one—to the more

cruel sack of the city by Darius Hystaspis. But the first clause is applicable enough to the capture by Cyrus: "Every one that is overtaken shall be thrust through," agrees very well with the fact recorded by Xenophon, that the parties of horse sent to scour the streets on the night in which the city was taken, had strict orders to slay all whom they met with out of doors.

The remarkable verse 17, in which the Medes and Persians are described as regardless of silver and gold in this service, claims special attention. It is every way a remarkable prediction, because it is by no means a characteristic of conquerors to be regardless of these things, which, indeed, have been the chief objects of many great military undertakings. But let us see how it was borne out.

On returning from his successful campaign in Armenia against the Chaldeans, who had invaded that country, Cyrus was met by the wife of the Armenian king, who had brought with her immense treasure, with which to testify the gratitude of the nation. This treasure had been kept hidden and hoarded up by the king; who had, however, before offered it to Cyrus, by whom it had been declined; so now he said to the princess: "I cannot consent to appear as a man who goes about the world bestowing his services for money. Go your way, woman; and keep all the treasure that you have brought. But do not suffer your husband to again hoard it up. Employ it rather in equipping your son becomingly for the wars; and let the rest be spent in providing whatever of use or elegance may enable you, with your husband and children, to spend your days in a pleasant and becoming manner. Let it suffice us to lay our bodies under ground when we die."

In another campaign against the Assyrians, in which he was assisted by the Hyrcanians and others, he induced his Persians to give up with alacrity the rich spoil they had obtained from the enemy to the allies, himself setting the example. This was not the only occasion on which he showed himself regardless of spoil, and in which the forces under him evinced the same sentiments.

More remarkable still in connection with the special refer-

ence to the Medes in the present text, is the commencement of the speech, which, on one occasion, Cyrus made to them and other allies. "Medes, and all you who are here present, I know well that you have not come with me out of any desire of acquiring wealth," etc.

On another occasion, Cyrus, with his friends and the chiefs of his army, were hospitably entertained by Gobyras, an Assyrian governor, whose son had been slain by the Babylonian king, and whose hope for protection and vengeance lay in the Persians. This person, in the presence of this noble party, produced a vast quantity of precious treasure—vessels of gold, rich furniture and apparel, gold coin without count, and all sorts of valuables. Last of all he introduced his daughter, as one mourning for her brother's loss; and he said: "Cyrus, all these treasures I bestow upon thee. This, my daughter, I also entrust to thee, to dispose of as thou deemest best. But we are both thy suppliants. I cry to thee to be the avenger of my son; she, that thou wilt avenge her brother." Cyrus promised all they wished: but as for the treasures—"These," said he, "I also accept, but only to bestow them on this thy daughter, and to the man who may espouse her." Not long after, some detachment which had been sent into the Babylonian territory returned with abundant spoil. Cyrus called together the commanders, and proposed that in acknowledgment of the hospitality with which they had been treated, they should, after deducting what was due to the gods, and what might be necessary to suffice the soldiers, give all the rest, all their own shares, to Gobyras. This proposal was highly applauded by the officers; and one of them said: "Let us do this by all means. I believe," he added, "that Gobyras took us for a beggarly people, because we come not with darics* in abundance, and do not drink out of cups of gold. But if we do as you propose, he will understand that it is possible even for those who have no gold to be generous."

A Persian gold coin worth rather more than a guinea.

Instances to the same effect might be multiplied. Indeed, the indifference to spoil and gain which Cyrus himself felt, and with which he, to a great extent, succeeded in inspiring his soldiers, was so continually evinced in his career, as to come to be regarded as a characteristic of the general and of his army. Crœsus, in whom the principle of accumulation was as strongly exemplified as that of dispersive liberality was in Cyrus, was astonished at the little regard he had for silver and the small delight he took in gold, and warned him, that with such opportunities as few men ever possessed of accumulating vast treasures, he must, on this principle of conduct, expect to be always poor.

EIGHTEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

INCIDENTS OF ANCIENT WARFARE.—ISAIAH XXI.

THE fourteenth chapter of Isaiah is occupied with a magnificent triumphal ode on the overthrow of Babylon. But as this supplies no circumstantial details of the kind we here seek, we pass on to the twenty-first chapter. The subject, as we have already partly considered it, is resumed with many new and interesting intimations.

1 "The burden of the desert of the sea.
As whirlwinds in the south pass through;
So it cometh from the desert,
From a terrible land.
2 A grievous vision is declared unto me;
The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously and the spoiler spoileth.*
Go up, Olam! besiege, O Media!
All the sighing thereof have I made to cease.†
3 Therefore are my loins filled with pain:
Pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth;

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* Not well translated. Better thus, as in Henderson—
"The plunderer plundering, and the destroyer destroying."
† Rather, "all the cause of sighing," that is, the oppression, etc.

I was bowed down at the hearing of it;
I was dismayed at the seeing of it.
4 My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me;
The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.
5 Prepare the table,
Watch in the watch-tower,
Eat and drink:
Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.
6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me,
Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.
7 And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen,
A chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels;
And he hearkened diligently with much heed:
8 And he cried, A lion,*
My lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time,
And I am set in my ward whole nights.
9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men,
With a couple of horsemen.
And he answered—and said,
Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

"This oracle or ode," says Mr. Barnes, in his Note on Isaiah (here amplifying Lowth), "is one of very singular beauty. It distinguished for its brevity, energy, and force; for the variety and rapidity of the action; and for the striking manner in which the events are made to pass before the mind. It is the language of strong excitement and alarm; language that expresses rapid and important movements; and language that belongs to great vigor in conception and sublimity in description. In the oracle the prophet supposes himself in Babylon, and the events which are described are made to pass rapidly in vision before him."

He first sees a dreadful storm coming at a distance—figuring the hostile armies—approaching like a whirlwind, and threatening destruction to everything in its way. This comparison is the more appropriate, as the approach of such whirl-

* Some render this into, "He cried out like a lion;" others by "Like a lion [they come]." The latter seems to come in best. The original is simply "A lion," as in the authorized version.

winds as the prophet has in view, is indicated by vast and dense bodies of dust and sand raised into the air, and presenting in the distance an appearance not at all dissimilar to that which is occasioned by the clouds of dust raised by the advance of a large body of men and cattle. In Babylon, as in Palestine, such whirlwinds come mostly from the south, in which direction the arid deserts of Arabia extend. Hence the whirlwind is here properly referred to that direction, although the invasion figured by it came from another quarter.

The prophet then (verse 2) represents himself as acquainted with the real purport of the vision; and he hears the voice of God, summoning Elam (Persia) and Media to the siege. Regarding himself as among the exiles in Babylon, and in view of these invading hosts (verses 3, 4), he describes himself as deeply affected at the view of this sudden invasion, and of the calamities that hung over Babylon. The images here employed are such as are frequently used in Scripture to express the utmost intensity of agitation and concern. It is somewhat doubtful whether the prophet expresses this in his own person or in that of Babylon. Barnes thinks the former; Lowth and Henderson the latter, and with them we are disposed to agree, as there is no reason why the prophet should express so much concern at the accomplishment of that at which he elsewhere exults, and which is everywhere upheld as a triumphal fulfilment of the Lord's purposes.

In the next verse (5), the prophet, in his own person, describes the state of the Babylonians. This is done in a few rapid and graphic words. The night of fear is one of destined pleasure. They are represented as preparing the table, making ready for feasting and revelry, setting the watch on the watch-tower, and giving themselves up to feasting; and then as being suddenly alarmed, and called upon to anoint the shield, and prepare for war. Nothing can more strikingly than this depict the night-capture of the city by Cyrus during a night of feasting, as already described. Take it as we will, this is one of the most surprising prophecies ever uttered, and second only, in convincing effect, to that in which Cyrus is called *by name*

to the great work which was given him to do. It is in every respect as exact as if the whole scene were, as it seems to have been in vision, present, in all its circumstances, to the narrator's mind; or as being, at least, written immediately after, instead of several generations *before* the event. As it was impossible for any human imagination to have guessed at so singular a combination of circumstances, we must regard this as one of the strong points calculated to impress the mind of Cyrus, when the prophecy was presented to his notice, and to work in him the convictions on which he acted. Those who strive to illustrate the memory of this great man, have little to exult in that he yielded to such evidence; for he must have been not only much less candid and open-minded than he really was, but much less so than mankind usually are, had he resisted the sunbeam evidence which this and other passages supply.

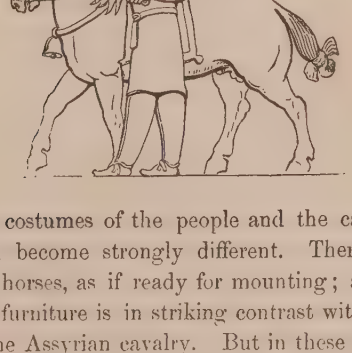
Even the circumstances of fixing the guards finds corroboration; for in the account which Xenophon gives of the transactions in Babylon, he says that the inhabitants, "having arranged their guards, drank till light."

The call to "anoint the shield" seems to have been a well-known call to arms, amounting to, "Hold your weapons ready for action." And this was founded upon the circumstance, that the ancient shields being mostly of stout leather stretched over a frame or rim of metal or wood, it was necessary to rub them with oil, lest they should become hard and crack, or lest they should become so rigid that an arrow or spear might easily penetrate them. Shields of this kind are still much in use, and still require the same treatment, in Western Asia; and we have ourselves frequently seen them on sale in the bazaars, and in use among the Arabs, the Kûrds, and the Caucasians.

The prophet next proceeds to describe what came to pass. He does not narrate the matter, but he describes himself as directed to appoint a watchman to announce what he shall see. The watchman sees troops approaching, variously mounted, and intended, without doubt, to indicate what would actually

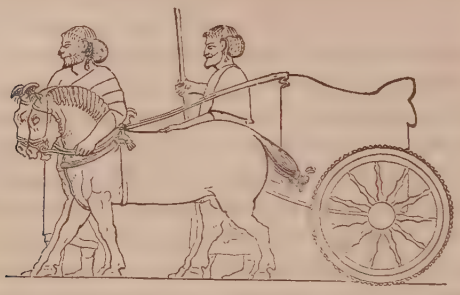
be most conspicuous to a person viewing the advancing hosts from the high places of Babylon. He sees a troop of horses, two abreast (for so the text is to be understood), then a troop of camels, then a troop of asses. The horses require no particular explanation, as the Persians have been famous for their cavalry in all ages, and were so in the age of Cyrus. But let it be observed, that in this prediction there is something of the same nature as the prediction of that hero's name before he existed. For the Persians had no partiality for cavalry before his time; and it was owing to his measures, his care, and his exhortations, that they were rendered so famous as horsemen, and acquired a taste which survives among them to this day. This matter is very conspicuously set forth by Xenophon; and by him also it is particularly mentioned, that, as here described, the Persian cavalry marched in double ranks.

It is remarkable, however, that the contemporary Persian sculptures afford no examples of men on horseback, although they occur abundantly in the Sassanian sculptures of a later



date, when the costumes of the people and the caparisons of the horses had become strongly different. There are, however, a few led horses, as if ready for mounting; and the simplicity of their furniture is in striking contrast with the showy trappings of the Assyrian cavalry. But in these we still find the "bell," mentioned in Zech. xiv. 20. The horses also seem of heavier form than those of the Assyrians. The same comparative simplicity is likewise seen in the chariots, which are

devoid of ornament, and are of a much heavier build than those of the Assyrians.



Then as to the camels. There has been much conjecture with respect to them. The Bedouin Arabs certainly use them in their battles, and the modern Persians have a kind of artillery mounted on camels. It is known also, that in all Eastern armies camels have been much in request for the carriage of baggage. But we need not any of these sources of illustration, for we have seen in the description of the battle of Thybarra, that Cyrus had in his army a corps of camels mounted by Arabian archers; and that these camels rendered him essential service on more than one occasion. Some persons have supposed, from the anecdotes there related, that the camels were employed merely to frighten the horses of the enemy; but if they had examined the matter more closely, they would have seen that this use of them was merely incidental, and was founded upon an observation (made probably by Cyrus himself), that the sight and smell of camels were offensive to horses not accustomed to them,—their proper use being to carry two skilful archers, back to back. It is highly probable that the Arabians, who, as Xenophon states, were present at the siege of Babylon, were no other than the riders of these camels.

We trace the same minute accuracy in the mention of asses. Many of our readers will say that they never heard of asses being employed in war. Yet so it was; and that, too, in the

army of the Persians. We do not, indeed, find any direct testimony of their use in the army of Cyrus; but the fact that they were so, may be inferred from our knowledge that asses are expressly mentioned by Strabo, as having been employed by Darius Hystaspis in his warfare against the Scythians. Whether they formed a regular part of the military force, or that there was something in the special service against Babylon which rendered the services of asses important, cannot be determined. It is enough to show, that they were sometimes employed by the Persians in their military operations; and it is to be borne in mind, that the asses in question were something very different from those we are in the habit of seeing—the species in those parts being the finest in the world, of large size, of comely proportions, of much strength, and of considerable fleetness.

It appears to us that the eighth verse, in which the watchman describes himself as having watched day and night, is introduced to mark an interval of the action, corresponding to the two years which Cyrus spent before the walls of Babylon, during which he carefully took note of what was to come of this great array. With reference to that passage, let it be observed, that when the ancients stationed a watch for a special purpose, they did not continually relieve and change the watcher, but kept the same man as much as possible on duty, that they might secure the benefit of his *practised* observation. The text, "I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and am set in my ward whole nights," has been pointed out in the "Pictorial Bible" as being remarkably similar to a passage at the opening of the "Agamemnon" of Eschylus, being the speech of the watcher who had long been stationed upon his tower to look out for the signal which should make known that Troy had fallen. It is given in the words of Symmons' translation:—

> "Forever thus? O keep me not, ye gods,
> Forever thus, fixed in the lonely tower
> Of Atreus' palace, from whose height I gaze

O'erwatched and weary, like a night dog still
Fixed to my post: meanwhile the rolling year
Moves on, and I my wakeful vigils keep,
By the cold star-light sheen of spangled skies."

After this pause, the sacred watcher perceives the final movement; he sees them come in "like lions," and, in his certainty of the inevitable consequences, cries—"BABYLON IS FALLEN—IS FALLEN!"

This has been pointed out by writers on rhetoric as a very fine example of intensity of expression given by iteration. It has been imitated with advantage, though to the verge of exaggeration, by Dryden, in the only great ode the English language possesses; and that with reference to the last of the ancient Persian kings.

"He sang Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood:
Deserted at his utmost need
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes."—*Alexander's Feast.*

EIGHTEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

DETAILS FROM JEREMIAH.—ISAIAH XLV. XLVI.; JEREMIAH L. LI.

THE prophecies concerning Babylon in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth chapters of Isaiah, treat generally of the destruction awaiting that city; and Cyrus is distinctly named as the Lord's instrument for the subversion of the Babylonian empire.

The greater portion of these prophecies have been before referred to in illustration of matters which have already engaged our attention, according to the order which we have formed for

the more connected consideration of the whole subject, such as the character and religion of Cyrus and the confederacy of Crœsus. They contain little that bears upon the military operations against Babylon. There are, however, one or two passages which demand our special attention before we proceed to the parallel prophecy of Jeremiah, which it seems desirable to consider here in order to complete the subject. There is first this remarkable passage in Isaiah xliv. 27:

> "Who saith to the deep, 'Be dry;'
> And, 'I will dry up thy rivers.'"

There is no mistaking the application of this to Babylon; and in Jeremiah li. 36, we have the parallel passage applied by name to that city: "I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry." Taking this in connection with the other prophecies which have engaged our attention, it is impossible to doubt that this is a prediction of the means by which Cyrus was to gain access to the city; namely, by the bold and extraordinary operation of exhausting the bed of the river, in the way which has already been described; forming, therefore, one of these wonderful points in the prophecy, which being utterly beyond all the possibilities of human calculation, prove it to be indeed the word of God.

Of the same nature is the other passage which we quote from Isaiah xlv. 1, 2, where the Lord, speaking of Cyrus, declares it to be his intention

> "To open before him the two-leaved gates;
> And the gates shall not be shut.
> I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
> And cut in sunder the bars of iron."

Now although this may have, and probably has, a general reference to the facility with which strong towns should be acquired by him, it is impossible to doubt that it has special reference to the singular and most providential circumstance, that the river-gates of Babylon were left open on the night of the festival. Indeed, the words—"The gates shall not be

shut," seem to express the matter as plainly as words can do; and they imply a peculiarity strictly applicable to the case; for it is usual to say that the gates of a besieged town were opened, or were beaten down; but that they were "not shut" at a time when it was customary to shut them, is a very different and much rarer matter. Let it be noted also that the gates were of "brass;" and that Babylon was famous for its brazen gates. They were one hundred in number, twenty-five on each side of the city; and the valves, as well as the posts and pivots, were of massive brass. The whole matter was so extraordinary, so much beyond the range of human speculation, that when Cyrus was made acquainted with this prophecy, he must have felt that the circumstance had been ordered by a special providence, to which he owed not only his victory but his safety. It is admitted by Herodotus that if the Babylonians had possessed but the slightest intimation or forethought of the plan of Cyrus, and had only kept shut the inner gates leading to the river, the Persian host might have been caught in the bed of the stream as in a net, and destroyed at leisure.

The fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah are occupied with a prophecy, parallel to those of Isaiah, of the capture of Babylon by the Persians, and of the desolation which should eventually fall upon that great city. As nearly the same facts are stated in both prophecies, and often in nearly the same form of words, we shall not quote Jeremiah's prophecy at length, but shall rather select those points involving facts which have not already come under our notice, and such details as are more distinctly produced in this than in any other prophecy.

> "Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about:
> All ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare not the arrows;
> For she hath sinned against the Lord."—Jeremiah l. 14.

There the weapon for which the Persians were famous is prominently produced, as the chief arm to be employed against Babylon. Again in the twenty-ninth verse:—

> "Call together the archers against Babylon;
> All ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about."

Which last line is very distinct, as showing not only that the arrow was to be the chief weapon of the besiegers, but that they were to encamp around the city, as they did for two years. We have all heard that the three things principally taught to the youth of ancient Persia were to ride, to *shoot with the bow*, and to speak the truth. In fact, when Cyrus first obtained command of an army, he found that the arms in which the Persians were most expert were the bow and the javelin, and that they had no weapons suited to close action. Those he strove to introduce, and did so to a considerable extent; but the bow still remained the chief and favorite weapon

of the nation; and it continued to be such till the introduction of the gun, which was, however, slow in superseding the arrow, and has not completely done so even to our own day.

Another passage gives a vivid picture of the character of the host (composed as it was of auxiliaries from various nations, many of them distant) which came against Babylon. The particulars have been already illustrated; but the passage may be here produced, as every phrase in it is an historical fact:—

"Behold a nation shall come from the north, and a great nation,
And many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.
They shall hold the bow and the lance:
They are cruel, and will not show mercy:
Their voice shall roar like the sea,
And they shall ride upon horses,
Every one put in array, like a man for the battle,
Against thee, O daughter of Babylon."—Jeremiah l. 41, 42.

The verse we next quote, being the 12th of the fifty-first chapter, gives the same particulars as have been considered in connection with Isaiah; but there is one important addition in the reference to "the ambushes," or, as in the margin of our Bibles, "the liers in wait," which is a manifest allusion to the men who were stationed at the extremities of the city, to march in by the bed of the river as soon as its stream should be drained.

"Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon,
Make the watch strong, set up the watchmen,
Prepare the ambushes;
For the Lord hath both devised and done,
That which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon."

There is here a clear indication of the use of standards among the Persians. We do not find any illustration of this fact among the sculptures. According to the native authorities, the standard of Persia from before the time of Cyrus to the Moslem conquest, was—a blacksmith's apron! It was the apron of a blacksmith named Kawah, who relieved the country from the oppressions of the tyrant Zohak, and placed the rightful heir (Feridun) on the throne of his fathers. The blacksmith had used his apron as a standard; and it was adopted as the national banner by the grateful Feridun. As such, it was richly ornamented with jewels, to which every king from Feridun to the last of the Pehlivi monarchs added. If this legend be true, and there seems no reason against it, this blacksmith's apron may have been the standard set upon the walls of Babylon.

There is a passage further on which we must quote, on account of the strong and emphatic manner in which it describes the *instrumentality* of Cyrus and his army. It is true that Cyrus is not *named* by Jeremiah, as by Isaiah, but we are throughout enabled to recognize him by the correspondence of the prophecies, and by the fact that they must be applicable to the conqueror of Babylon; and that was Cyrus:—

"Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war:
For with thee will I break in pieces the nations;

And with thee will I destroy kingdoms;
And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider;
And with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider;
With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman;
And with thee will I break in pieces old and young;
And with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid;
I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock;
And with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen;
And with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers;
And I will render unto Babylon,
And to all the inhabitants of Chaldea,
All their evil that they have done in Zion,
In your sight, saith the Lord."—Jeremiah li. 20–24.

The verses we are about to cite are those which contain the most considerable of the new points concerning the siege which Jeremiah offers; and which, for the sake of the connection we produce here, though generally averse to travel beyond the book on which we are formally engaged:

27 "Set ye up a standard in the land,
Blow the trumpet among the nations;
Prepare the nations against her,
Call together against her
The kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz;
Appoint a captain against her;
Cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars [locusts.]
28 Prepare against her the nations,
With the kings of the Medes,
The captains thereof with all the rulers thereof,
And all the land of his dominion.*
29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow:
For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon,
To make the land of Babylon a desolation,
Without an inhabitant.

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* This verse reads better in Blayney's translation:—
"Enlist nations against her,
The king of Media, the captains thereof,
And all the rulers thereof,
And all the land under his dominion."

30 The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight,
They have remained in their holds: their might hath failed;
They became as women:
They have burned their dwelling-places:
Her bars are broken.
31 One post shall run to meet another,
And one messenger to meet another,
To show the king of Babylon
That his city is taken at one end,*
32 And that the passages are stopped,
And the reeds† they have burned with fire,
And the men of war are affrighted."

The twenty-seventh verse is very interesting, from its particular mention of the northern auxiliaries which were engaged in the siege. It is agreed that Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz, represent provinces in and near Armenia, and to the north of Media—and, of course, still more to the north, as Media itself was, of Babylon. Now it is by no means explicitly stated in history that troops of these nations were present at the siege. But we felt anxious to ascertain the actual presence of forces so conspicuously mentioned by the inspired prophet, and have the satisfaction of believing that we have succeeded. Looking back, then, to an earlier period in the history of these important events, we find that before Cyrus set forth upon the great war which has been described in a preceding Reading, and of which the siege of Babylon was the illustrious consummation, he was joined by Tigranes, son of the Armenian king, with a force consisting of four thousand horse, ten thousand archers, and ten thousand armed with shield and spear. We hear little of the subsequent exploits of this force separately considered. But its presence *through all the war* is manifested by that of its commander, who stood high in the favor of Cyrus, and who was among the allies dismissed with distinction and much spoil

* Better, "From end to end.'—BLAYNEY.

† Right *literally*: but probably, in fact, "Stockades," as HENDERSON. BLAYNEY's "torches" is objectionable, as requiring a new rendering of the Hebrew text.

to his own home, after the affairs of the East had been settled by the conquest of Babylon. This we collect from Xenophon: and the Armenian historians, in entire conformity with these intimations, state more explicitly that Tigranes, at the head of the Armenian army, acted with Cyrus in the war which gave him possession of the Lydian empire, and afterwards proceeded with him to the siege of Babylon, in which service the Armenian forces took a distinguished part.*

The thirtieth verse, in which the Babylonians are described as abiding within their holds and forbearing to fight, is in circumstantial agreement with the history, by which we learn, as in the sketch we have given of the operations, that the Babylonians having been defeated and driven back by Cyrus when they went forth to oppose him on his first approach, never afterwards stirred beyond the walls.

The statement in the same verse that the dwelling places should be burned, does not at the first view appear to be corroborated by the history. But on closer inspection we find that this measure was present to the minds of the Persians before they entered the city, and was without doubt to some extent executed. In the short speech which Cyrus is reported to have made to the soldiers before they entered the bed of the Euphrates, he alludes to their principal danger, which appears to have been regarded with apprehension,—that of being assaulted with missiles from the house-tops as they passed through the streets. He told them that if the inhabitants retreated to the house-tops, the best course would be to assail their doors by setting them on fire. He observed that the porches were very combustible, being made of palm-wood and coated with bitumen; and as the army was supplied with torches and tow in abundance, it would be very easy to set the houses in flames, when the inhabitants must either come out of their dwellings or be consumed in them.

More remarkable still, is the intimation in the next verse that messengers from the opposite sides of the city would meet

* See AVDALL'S *History of Armenia*. Calcutta. 1827

at the royal palace in the centre to apprize the king that the city was taken from end to end. That this actually took place we know as two detachments entered by the bed of the river, at the opposite ends of the city, and agreed to meet in the centre at the royal palace. So singular a circumstance could not beforehand have appeared probable to any human imagination, and the mention of it would alone suffice to impress the heartfelt conviction that the prophet spoke under the direction and control of Him "who declares the end from the beginning;" and to whose eternal mind all the future of all the ages to come is as present as all that has been done in all the ages past.

Nineteenth Week—Sunday.

WAIT.—ISAIAH XLIX. 23.

THIRTY years ago, before "the Lord caused me to wander from my father's house," and from my native place, I put my mark upon this passage in Isaiah,—"I am the Lord: they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." Of the many books I now possess, the Bible that bears that mark is the only one of them all that belonged to me at that time. It now lies before me; and I find that, although the hair which was then dark as night, has meanwhile become "a sable silvered," the ink which marked this text has grown into intensity of blackness as the time advanced, corresponding with, and in fact recording, the growing intensity of the conviction, that "they shall not be ashamed that wait for Thee." I believed it then; but I know it now; and I can write *probatum est*, with my whole heart, over against the symbol which that mark is to me, of my ancient faith.

"They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me." Looking back through the long period that has passed since I set my mark to these words—a period which forms the best and brightest, as well as the most trying and conflicting of all

men's lives—it is a joy to be able to say: "I have waited for Thee, and have not been ashamed. Under many perilous circumstances, in many most trying scenes, amid faintings within and fears without, and under sorrows that rend the heart, and troubles that crush it down, I have waited for Thee; and, lo, I stand this day as one not ashamed."

Old scholars and divines were wont to write or paint up in their studies some favorite sentence from the sages of old, or some chosen text of Scripture. Those inclined to follow this custom could not do better than write up this one word, "WAIT." It is but a monosyllable; but it is fuller of meaning than any other word in the language, and it is applicable to all ages, and to all circumstances. At the first slight view, merely to "wait," seems so simple a thing, as scarcely entitled to be called a grace; and yet larger promises are made to it than to any other grace, except to faith; and hardly, indeed, with that exception, for the grace of "waiting" is part of the grace of faith,—is a form of faith,—is, as some would describe it, an effect of faith; or, more strictly, one of its most fruitful manifestations.

Great and singular is the honor which God has set upon patient waiting for Him. Man, seeing not as God sees, sets higher value upon his fellows' active works—the bright deeds of days or hours. God values these also; but He does not assign them the same pre-eminence as man does; He does not allow them any pre-eminence over that constant and long-enduring struggle with the risings of the natural mind, which is evinced in long and steady waiting under all discouragements for Him—in the assured conviction that He will come at last for deliverance and protection, although his chariot wheels are so long in coming.

It requires but little reflection to perceive that the Lord's judgment in this matter is better than man's. *Active* virtue brings present reward with it. Apart from the encouraging applause it obtains from some—more or fewer—it is attended with a pleasurable excitation of spirits, in the mere sense of action, as well as in the hopes and aspirations connected with

it. There is nothing of this in mere patient waiting—day after day, through long years perhaps, and it may be in dust and ashes—until the Lord shall *manifest* towards us his love, his sympathy, his care. But to rest thus in the assured conviction that He will do so—to do Him the credit of believing that nothing less than this is his intention towards us—is a tribute rendered by faith to his honor, which He holds in most high esteem, and which he does most abundantly recompense; and this it needs. For it is a quality of the Christian character—much less one which God only can truly understand—which finds little encouragement but from Him, and which receives less than any other the outer sustainment of man's admiration and approval.

It is also eminently conducive to the completion of the Christian character in its peculiar qualities, to nourish that habit of constant looking to the Lord, of constant dependence on Him, of vital faith in Him, of constant readiness for Him—which is far more precious in his sight than all the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, of which men could make oblation to Him. It is, therefore, no marvel, that this passive form is that chiefly, both for their soul's good and for his own honor, in which God has in all ages seen fit to exercise his servants—from ancient Abraham down to the youngest son of Abraham's faith. Let us take comfort and encouragement from these most true things.

Art thou plunged deep into troubles from which the hand of man will not or cannot save thee? or does thy soul lie in the deep waters, from which no strength of man can draw thee forth? "Wait on the Lord; He will save thee;"* and cry to Him, "Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day."†

Is thy good evil spoken of among men; and thy name cast forth as evil among those who once delighted in thee; but who now seek to lay thine honor in the dust? Fear not. All will be right anon. Thy Vindicator lives, and will ere long bring thee forth in white robes, free from all the stains

* Proverbs xx. 22. † Psalm xxv. 5.

that men strove to cast upon thee. Remember that thy Lord suffered all this, and much more, for thee. Remember "The Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for Him."*

There are two bitter enemies of man's true life—the world without him, and the world within him—the world in his heart. The conflict is sometimes terrible, and thou dost sometimes feel as one left without strength, and thy hands fail, and thy heart grows faint. What is this but to teach thee where thy true strength lies, and to cast thee off from every other? "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage; and He shall strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord."†

Sometimes the discouragement is deeper yet. We live under the hidings of our Master's face. He seems to have covered himself with a thick cloud, which our sight cannot pierce, and which our prayers cannot pass through—they fall consciously short of their aim, and come back to the dull earth, flat and unprofitable. But be of good cheer. This cannot last forever, nor last long. Only "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;"‡ and be assured that "the Lord is good to them that wait for Him;"§ and although it may be that now, for a little while, thou liest void of strength, and almost lifeless upon the ground, yet, amid this chilliness, still wait; though wounded, wait—holding fast the conviction which his promise gives. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."‖

To have waited for the Lord, He allows to constitute a claim to his tender consideration for us. "Be gracious to us; we have waited for Thee."¶ And no one ever yet could truly say, "I waited patiently for the Lord," without being enabled rejoicingly to add,—"and He heard me."** And in that day of full fruition of all we have waited for, shall we not, out of the fulness of our replenished hearts, cry with exulting shouts

* Isa. xxx. 18. † Psa. xxvii. 14. ‡ Psa. xxxvii. 7. § Lam. iii. 25.
‖ Isa. xl. 31. ¶ Isa. xxxiii. 2. ** Psalm xl. 1.

to all that pass by,—"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, and will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."*

NINETEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

CHINA IN SCRIPTURE.—ISAIAH XLIX. 11, 12.

Was China known to the ancients—especially was it known to the Jews, and is there any mention of it in Scripture? To the last question most of our readers will, from their own impression or recollection, at once say, "No." This is, however, less certain than appears; and the question is, in fact, raised by the text before us, in which, speaking of the ultimate gathering of the nations to Christ, it is said: "I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and the west; and these from the land of Sinim."

It has been suggested, that the land of Sinim means the land of China or of the Chinese; and this notion, which was *formerly* regarded with little favor by interpreters, has been of late years taken up and warmly advocated on the Continent, not only by Biblical scholars, but by comparative philologists, whose conclusions must be allowed much weight in such a question. We must confess that we were once opposed to this view, or rather, did not acquiesce in it; but on a review of the whole subject, with the advantage of later researches, we now incline to entertain it with very little hesitation.

It is clearly intended in this text, to indicate the universal extent of this ingathering of nations, by pointing to the remotest quarters in different directions. Still it must be allowed that there is some obscurity and difficulty in the mode of indication. At the first view, it seems doubtful whether more than

* Isaiah xxv. 9.

three directions in all are designated; and then, whether more than two, or even one of these, is distinctly intimated. The *north* is clear enough. The word translated the *west* is "the sea;" and is, therefore, not free from uncertainty: but as the sea does usually denote the west in all such distributive intimations, with reference to the Mediterranean, which lay to the west of Palestine, it is needless to suppose that it means anything else here.

Having thus two directions, north and west, expressly stated, it remains to look for the south and the east.

It is very clear, that if four quarters of the world, or rather the four cardinal points, are at all stated, one of them is comprised in "those that come *from far*," because this is one of the only four terms of indication which the verse contains. It has been thought by some, indeed, that this clause is not a single item in an enumeration of particulars, but a generic statement comprehending the specific statements that follow. This interpretation appears to have originated in a wish to give the widest meaning that can be afforded to the terms of the prediction, as against the restricted local application for which some have contended. But the interpretation is not required to establish this larger meaning, seeing that if one of the four quarters is denoted by the phrase "from afar," the idea necessarily suggested is, that all the other points enumerated are likewise remote. That "from afar," really does stand for one of the points of the compass, seems to be clear from the necessity and the probability of the case. When four local designations are given, one of which certainly, another almost certainly, and a third (the land of Sinim, in this case) most probably, denote particular directions, it is most natural to conclude that the fourth is so used likewise, however vague it may be in itself as an indication. The presumption thus created is confirmed by the fact, that the hypothesis of only three divisions admits that the whole earth was meant to be included; and it thus becomes a question whether it is most agreeable to general usage, and that of Scripture in particular, to understand a threefold or fourfold division of the earth in

such connections. If the latter, as is certainly the case, then analogy is strongly in favor of the supposition, that the first clause, "from afar," is not co-extensive with the other, but contains the first of four particulars enumerated. Over and above this argument, derived from the usual distinction of four points or quarters, there is another furnished by the use of the pronoun *these*, when repeated so as to express a distributive idea. In all such cases, *these* and *these* mean *some* and *others;* nor is there, perhaps, a single instance where the first *these* comprehends the whole, while the others divide it into parts. This would be just as foreign from the Hebrew idiom, as it would be from ours to say, "Some live in Europe, some in France, some in Holland;" when we mean that some live in Holland, some in France, and all in Europe.

From all this it seems to follow, that the verse most probably contains the customary distribution of the earth or heavens into four great quarters, and that one of them is designated by the phrase "from afar."

Assuming, therefore, that "from afar" designates one of the points of the compass, it remains to inquire what point this is. And that we have already the north and the west, *this* must be either the south or the east. Some have contended for the east, and this has been met by the just remark, that "afar" never does mean the east, and is not elsewhere used to denote it. But it seems to have escaped the notice of those who have written on the subject, that "from afar," or at least the equivalent expression, is used to denote the south in Scripture; as in our Saviour's declaration "the queen of *the south* came from the *uttermost parts of the earth* to hear the wisdom of Solomon." We cannot go any further in showing that "afar" denotes the south; but if we can show—and to this we have now narrowed the question, that the land of Sinim is in the *east*, the other question is settled by the absence of the alternatives, and "afar" must stand for the south.

A Canaanitish tribe called the Sinites is named in Genesis x. 17, and 1 Chronicles i. 15; we have also the wilderness of Sin, and the mountains of Sinai; Egypt also might possibly

be called the land of Sinim from Syene, or from the city of Sin, otherwise Pelusius; accordingly, all these have found advocates, but to all of them the objection is open, that they are all too near at hand to suit the context, whether "from afar" be taken as a general description or a distinct specification.

It is to be noted that in the name Sinim the *im* is merely the sign of the Hebrew plural, and the proper name is to be sought in SIN as the radical portion of the word. Looking to the *remote* south, there is no nation known to the ancients, nor indeed any nation, that bore this name. A place or nation giving a name in its remoteness to any point of extreme distance, must have been a place or people of importance, for it is only such whose name and reputation reach to distant regions. There is none such in the south; and eastward, the only country important and remote that comes to us with this name is China, which is well ascertained to have been first known to the ancients by the name of Sina; Sin, Chin, or Jin (with the usual termination, *a*, added in the case of a country), being merely different modes of representing the same word. This is certainly a very important fact; to many it will seem sufficient and conclusive, being, indeed, as strong a piece of evidence as exists for the identification of many important ancient names. If this be correct, it is encouraging to find China set down *by name* as standing for the extreme east of the old world, and prophetically destined to be brought into the blessedness of Christ's kingdom. The remoteness of the country is not against this interpretation, but in favor of it, under the explanation of the first term, "from afar," which has been already given.

The statement already made indirectly disposes of many of the old objections to this interpretation. The only plausible ones that can still be urged against it may be reduced to two. The first is, that China was unknown to the Jews at the date of this prophecy. To this it may be answered, first, that no one who believes in the inspiration of the prophets, can refuse to admit the possibility of such a prediction, for the encouragement of future ages (as in the case of Cyrus), even if the fact

were so; and, indeed, it might be that the peculiar circumstances and seemingly inaccessible character of that great empire, might create a *peculiar need* for so distinct an intimation by a name which, in our day, the most renowned scholars and critics, holding different views of Divine inspiration, have with rare exceptions agreed, must denote China.

But, secondly, it is not impossible that China was known to the Hebrews even at a very early period. If the fleets of Solomon penetrated to the shores of India, or to Ceylon, nothing is more probable than that the intelligent and inquiring supercargoes whom such a king as Solomon would be sure to send therewith, may have heard something of the great country which lay in the still remoter east. It is hardly possible but that they must have made some inquiries on the subject, if only to bear back to their master some report respecting what might seem the utmost eastward bounds of the habitable earth. The answer would be, that beyond India lay the great country of Sin, or Sina, beyond which lay the great ocean, and that in this direction there was no further land. Again, some knowledge of this country and people may have existed in Egypt, and have been thence acquired by the Israelite. In the ancient Egypt which the monuments disclose, there is much to remind one of China. The type of their civilization was essentially the same; and there was great similarity in their habits of life, their arts, implements, and utensils. In fact, China is a living Egypt. This powerfully suggests that there was some connection between these countries, of which nothing is at present known distinctly, but which further researches in the ancient lore of China and of Egypt may disclose. We do not rely upon the proof for a commercial intercourse with Egypt which some have found in the fact, that porcelain vessels with Chinese inscriptions upon them have been found in the tombs of ancient Thebes—because another mode has been suggested in which these articles may have found their way into the tombs. But what we can say is, that in the face of what has within the present century been brought to light respecting the knowledge and intercourse of ancient nations, it is rash and hazardous to

affirm that in the time of Isaiah the Israelites could have had no knowledge of China, even by name. And this brings us to the apparently formidable objection, that the name Sinim is not that used by the Chinese themselves, nor by any other nation, until long after the date of this prophecy, it having been derived from a family that did not ascend the throne until 246 years before the birth of Christ. Too much stress has, however, been laid upon this dark and dubious tradition of a distant and unknown country. The very text before us makes it doubtful; the universal prevalence of the word Sin, Chin, or Jin, throughout eastern or southern Asia, from time immemorial, presupposes an antiquity still more remote; and the Chinese historians themselves record that the family from which the name derives its origin, for ages before it ruled the empire, ruled a province or kingdom on the western frontier, whence the name might easily have been extended to the western nations. There are, in fact, few cases of a name being more extensively or longer prevalent than that of CHINA, the very form in which it exists in Sanscrit, the mother tongue in south-eastern Asia. That the Chinese themselves have never used it, though acquainted with it, is nothing to the purpose. A Hebrew writer would, of course, use the name familiar in western Asia—even as we have always called, and so now call Persia, as did also the Hebrew writers, by a name which was never in use by the inhabitants of the land.

Upon the whole, then, if any other interpretation be given to Sinim, we cannot account for its being placed here as representing one of the quarters or divisions of the world. But if it mean China, that extreme limit of the eastern world, that hive of nations, supposed to comprehend a third part of the human race, a natural and consonant interpretation is reached. Even to us there would be nothing unintelligible or absurd, however strange or novel, in the combination, north, west, south, and China. On the whole, then, a hypothesis which solves all difficulties, satisfies the claims of philology and history, unites the suffrages of the most independent schools and

parties, fully meets the requisitions of the text and context, and opens a glorious field of expectation and effort to the church, may be safely regarded as the true one.*

NINETEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.—ISAIAH LIII. 2.

When we reflect that our Lord became indeed a man, and, as a man, was seen by friends and enemies walking the dusty roads and narrow streets of Palestine, there can be no harm in trying to realize to ourselves the appearance which He, as a man, during his sojourn on earth, presented to the eyes of men. That which ordinary men were permitted to behold in the common circumstances of daily life, we need not shrink from picturing to our minds. To attempt to realize materially to the mental conception, and still more to represent in painting or sculpture, the Divine Godhead, is a different matter from the attempt to depict to the mind Him who was "God *manifest* in the flesh." While, therefore, we can regard without displeasure even paintings in which the Lord Jesus is

* The principal authorities in support of this view, that Sinim denotes China, are Manasseh-ben-Israel, Montanus, Calmet, Gesenius, Winer, Maurer, Hitzig, Henderson, Umbreit, Hendewerk, Knobel, Beck, and Alexander. The last-named authority, in his *Later Prophecies of Isaiah* (New York, 1847; since reprinted in Glasgow, together with the *Earlier Prophecies*, under the editorial care of the Rev. Dr. Eadie), has given a large note on this question (pp. 178–185), on which this day's Reading is mainly founded, with some additional illustrations and suggestions. Professor Alexander largely examines an article on this question which appeared in the *Chinese Repository* from the pen of one of the missionaries, to which we have also referred, and have drawn from it further particulars. Besides these, the question has been examined as one of historical and literary interest by the most eminent comparative philologists, such as Langles, Lassen, and others, and whose conclusions are in support of the view that China is really denoted by this name.

represented in some of the circumstances of his life on earth, we cannot but shrink with dismay from the representations of God the Father, and of Christ glorified, which are so common abroad, and which, although but rarely seen here, are but too well known to us by means of engravings. The effect is injurious to the mind. Of this we can well judge, from the shock we only yesterday received in lighting accidentally upon an engraving thus representing the Almighty seated on his throne. The work was beautiful, but a faintness came over our spirit, and it was felt as if the soul had received some stain in having thus received the impact of an unspiritual idea of God.

But with regard to the Lord Jesus, the case is, as we have said, altogether different; and so long as the inquiry is conducted with the reverence due to his sacred and venerable person, it is quite allowable, and is indeed natural, to inquire in what aspect He appeared among men. In fact, whether like it or not, we do almost unconsciously form to ourselves an idea of the person of Christ. It is impossible to read the Gospels, containing the history of his life and death, without realizing to ourselves an idea of his appearance, just as we do of any other historical personage. It is impossible to help it: and it is no sin. These ideal images vary, but are more alike than might be supposed, being in a great degree founded upon the prints and pictures in which our Lord is represented, and which have all a certain resemblance to each other, being founded on traditional descriptions of no real authority, and on various ancient likenesses in medals, gems, pictures, statues—all acknowledged to be spurious.

There are, in fact, certain passages of the prophetical Scriptures which seem to invite, and have invited, attention to this question. Two of them occur in two adjoining chapters of Isaiah. No prophecies in the Bible more clearly refer to our Lord than those contained in chapters lii. liii. In the former we read (verse 14), "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." And in the latter (verse 2), "He hath no form nor comeliness and when

we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

This obviously raises the question, Was Jesus distinguished among men by the beauty of his person, or otherwise? We have not to inquire what is most pleasant to believe in this matter, but what is most probably true. For ourselves, we do not know what is "most pleasant" to believe. When we reflect, that of the men distinguished for personal graces, there are few who have taken a leading part in human affairs, or have won high names in the various paths of honor, we hesitate to think it more pleasant to contend that our Lord was endowed with that beauty which charms the eye. The world, however, has generally decided that it *is* more pleasant; and therefore certainly this is the prevalent opinion, and is likely to remain such.

In support of this view, we are referred to one of the Messianic Psalms (xlv.), in which Christ is described as "fairer than the sons of men;" and we are reminded that in our Lord's birth and bringing up, all the circumstances were present which, under ordinary circumstances, conduce to the perfection and beauty of the human form, and all the incidents were absent which tend to prevent its most admirable development. Some ascribe to the winning charm of his aspect, the facility with which the apostles left all to follow Him; and infer the solemn majesty of his countenance from the facts, that the dealers submitted to be driven from the Temple by his single hand, and that the men who came to apprehend Him in the garden fell back, subdued and dismayed, when He confronted them. This, in each instance, seems to us a wretchedly (we had almost said revoltingly) low ascription to the influence of personal appearance, the power of that Divine energy which wrought with Him and in Him as He would, and which doubtless was seen in his eyes and was heard in his voice, whatever may have been his personal appearance. The question is not to be decided by such considerations; and the text on which so much reliance is placed clearly refers to Christ glorified, and not to Christ in the day of his humiliation.

Besides, in different climates and countries, different ideas are entertained of that which constitutes beauty of personal appearance; and that which is beautiful in the eyes of one nation, is not so in that of another. Thus, if our Lord appeared under an aspect of outward beauty, it was doubtless Jewish beauty; and this, although upheld by some as the perfection of manly comeliness, is not, we apprehend, generally so regarded in Western and Northern Europe. This is shown by the fact that the painters, in their representations of our Lord's person, never ascribe to it a Jewish aspect.

Having this difference in the standard of human beauty in view, it is well that we are left in ignorance regarding the exact personal appearance of the founder of a religion destined to overspread all the nations of the earth.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the passages in Isaiah which refer to the subject, and which are found in the most literal of his prophecies, are altogether unfavorable to the idea of the Messiah's being distinguished for the beauty of his visage in the time of his earthly sojourning. The want of this is rather set forth as part of his humiliation, and with it that humiliation would scarcely have been complete. If we interpret literally the rest of this prophecy, why should this be figurative? May it not have been part of the Divine plan to rebuke the pride of man, and his inordinate appreciation of mundane beauty,—as it was in the assignment of the chief part in the calling of the Gentiles to the fold of Christ by one "whose bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible?"

The upholders of the literal interpretation of these passages, in their application to the person of Christ, reminds us that, throughout the New Testament, there is no ascription to Him of that outward grace and beauty as at once attracts the love and regard of man. It is remembered that Mary Magdalene took Him for the gardener, after his resurrection; and some, comparing this text with that in which Paul describes our Lord as having taken on Him "the form of a servant," urge for this a personal application also. It is also noted, that the

Evangelists record the circumstances of his transfiguration in such a manner as to show that his ordinary appearance to them was something very different indeed, and that it was then only, and for a moment, that He was seen by the three privileged disciples as "fairer than the sons of men."

It is further of some importance in a matter like this, that the earliest of the Christian writers, who lived at the time when any traditions that existed as to the person of the Lord Jesus were comparatively fresh and recent, agree in understanding that the humiliation of Christ extended to his personal appearance; and, indeed, we find this used by the early adversaries of Christianity as an argument against the Divinity of Christ. But after the three first centuries, this opinion gradually went out, and the notion came to be universally entertained, that Jesus was distinguished above men by the perfect beauty of his person. The Jewish commentators saw the advantage this gave them; and one of the most eminent of their number (Abarbanel) astutely argues that Jesus of Nazareth could not be the one prophesied of by Isaiah, seeing that they assigned to him this eminence of beauty, whereas the prophet declared the direct contrary of the subject of his prophecy.

Perhaps the right understanding of this matter would be to consider, that the person of our Lord was in no way distinguished for that mundane beauty which is always rare among men; but that He was not uncomely, save when, as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—when leading a life of hardship, travel, and privation—when grieving at the hardness of men's hearts—and when, after

> "Cold mountains and the midnight air
> Witnessed the fervor of his prayer,"

he became haggard and careworn, wan and wasted, affording visible evidence of the weight of that great burden which, for man's sake, He had consented to bear. But as we see among men that the power of soul, of mind—the expression of goodness, greatness, or of holy hope—irradiates, refines, exalts, and imparts an unutterable charm to countenances far more ordi-

nary than can be supposed to have belonged to the Saviour, how much more must the fact and consciousness of Divinity in Him have shone forth in his eyes, have given intense expression to his countenance, and commanding power to his words, diffusing about his person and his manner something more than the beauty which dwells in flesh, or even than that which the soul can impart to the human countenance—something unseen before on earth, in man or angel! Even in man, the conscious possession of power willingly restrained, of glory consentingly obscured, will impart an indescribable grandeur to the countenance and demeanor. What was this, then, in Him, who was the very "King of glory"—for whose triumphal entry heaven longed to open its everlasting gates—and whose power was still such, that not only would "twelve legions of angels" have gathered around Him at his asking, but whose word would have sufficed to shake the fabric of the universe?

NINETEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

STONE PILLAR WORSHIP.—ISAIAH LVII. 6.

This text is one of several in the Bible which refer to the worship of unshapen stones set up. The prophet, speaking of the abominations of idolatry, says,—"Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion: they, they are thy lot; even to them hast thou poured a drink-offering, thou hast offered a meat-offering. Should I receive comfort in these?" This is a difficult text to translate, and we question that it has here been translated quite correctly. But this does not matter for our present purpose, as the practice to which the text, as here translated, refers, is as strongly indicated in other parts of Scripture.

The earliest intimations of this form of idolatry, which exist in Scripture, describe it as subsisting among the Canaanites. The Hebrews were repeatedly enjoined to destroy these stone

idols of the Canaanites, to overthrow their altars, and "break their pillars."* And when the Israelites themselves, in their aberrations, were tempted to imitate these customs, Moses points a sarcasm at their delusion:—"Where are their gods, their *rock* in whom they trusted? How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their *rock* had sold them?"† This seems to have been the earliest form in which terrene objects became objects of idolatry. Before men discovered the use of metals, or the method of cutting rocks, they worshipped these unhewn stones—preferring, probably, those of a shape fit to be set on end, to be the more conspicuous, and smoothed by the action of water; and if the authority of Sanchoniathon is to be accepted, they consecrated *pillars* to the fire and to the wind, before they learned to hunt to fish, or to harden bricks in the sun. From Usous, "the first Phœnician," as he is styled by the same authority, the Canaanites seem to have acquired the practice of stone-pillar worship, traces of which, historical or actual, are to be found in almost every country of the old world—and in none more than in this, the western extremity of Europe, particularly in Cornwall, and in the islands and promontories from the Land's End to Caithness.

We must not confound these, as some do, with the simple stones of memorial, such as Jacob set up at Bethel,‡ or those which the Israelites set up at Gilgal,§ and the one placed by Joshua at Shiloh.‖ Indeed, in the second instance, all suspicion of superstitious taint or heathen imitation is precluded by the act being done by Divine command. It is, however, observable, that in this instance the stones were taken from the bed of the river, by the action of whose waters they had doubtless been smoothened, and, therefore, in this single respect offer a curious analogy to the "smooth stones of the stream" in the present text. It may also be conceded, that stones, originally set up for memorial purposes, may, in the course of time, have become objects of such superstitious regard, as not to be distin-

* Deut. vii. 5; xii. 3. † Deut. xxxii. 30, 37.
‡ Genesis xxviii. 18. 22. § Joshua iv. 5. ‖ Joshua xxiv. 26.

guishable from those of the other class, which were even in their origin idolatrous.

The worship of erected stones has maintained its ground, in some kind of superstitious reverence or other, to a much later period than is usually imagined. In Cornwall, which may have derived it directly from the Phœnicians, it did not cease till several centuries after the introduction of Christianity. Borlase, in his *Antiquities of Cornwall*, says: "After Christianity took place, many continued to worship these stones,—coming hither with lighted torches, and praying for safety and success; and this custom we can trace through the fifth and sixth centuries, and even into the seventh, as will appear from the prohibition of several councils."

Scheffer, in his *Description of Lapland* in 1673, states that the practice of stone-pillar worship then existed there, and that Storjunkar, one of the deities of Scandinavian mythology, was "represented by a stone. Neither do they use any art in polishing it, but take it as they find it upon the banks of lakes and rivers. In this shape they worship it as his image, and call it *Kied kie jumbal*,—that is, *the stone god*." He adds, that they select the unhewn stone, because it is the form in which it was shaped by the hand of the Creator himself. This, again, offers a curious coincidence with the text in Isaiah.

To come nearer, Martin, in his very curious account of the *Western Islands of Scotland* in 1703, describes repeatedly numerous pillar-stones, which were then objects of respect in the several localities; and in one instance he states, that an image, which was held in veneration in one of the islands, was swathed in linen. In speaking of the island of Eriska, to the north of Barra, Martin says: "There is a stone set up to the south of St. Columbus's church, about eight feet high, and two broad. It is called by the natives the *bowing stone;* for when the inhabitants had the first sight of the church, they set up this stone, and then bowed, and said the Lord's Prayer." Borlase, who notices this passage in his *Antiquities of Cornwall*, gives a more learned derivation of the name. He says: "They call them bowing stones, as it seems to me, from the

reverence shown them; for the *Eben Maschit*, which the Jews were forbade to worship, Lev. xxvi. 1, 'Neither shall ye set up any image of stone,'—signifies really a *bowing stone*, and was, doubtless, so called, because worshipped by the Canaanites."

In all parts of Ireland, stone pillars are to be found in comparative frequency. A writer in the *Archæologia* of the Society of Antiquaries for 1800, remarks that many of the stone crosses which form so beautiful and interesting a feature of Irish antiquities, were originally pagan pillar-stones, on which the cross was sculptured subsequent to the introduction of Christianity, in order that "the common people, who were not to be easily diverted from their superstitious reverence of these stones, might pay a kind of justifiable adoration to them, when thus appropriated to the use of Christian memorials by the sign of the cross."

"Justifiable adoration," indeed! But it seems very remarkable, that in at least one part of Ireland, a kind of adoration, not even in this degree "justifiable," is even in this enlightened nineteenth century rendered to a stone. In a work by the Earl of Roden, recently published, entitled, *Progress of the Reformation in Ireland*, there occurs a curious account of a remnant of this ancient form of fetichism, still existing at Inniskea, an island off the coast of Mayo, with about 380 inhabitants; among whom, he says, "A stone carefully wrapped up in flannel (like that mentioned by Martin) is brought out at certain periods to be adored; and when a storm arises, this god is supplicated to send a wreck on their coast." The same volume contains a letter from a correspondent, who states that, "Though nominally Roman Catholics, these islanders have no priest resident among them; they know nothing of the tenets of that church, and their worship consists in occasional meetings at their chief's house (an intelligent peasant of the name of Cain), with visits to a holy well called Derivla. The absence of religion is supplied by the open practice of pagan idolatry. In the south island a stone idol, called in the Irish *Neevougi*, has from time immemorial been religiously preserved and worshipped. Of the early history of this idol, no authentic infor-

mation can be procured, but its power is believed to be immense, they pray to it in time of sickness; it is invoked when a storm is desired to dash some hapless ship upon their coast; and again, it is solicited to calm the waves to admit of the islanders fishing or visiting the mainland."

This is certainly a startling intimation; and it would, as Sir J. Emerson Tennant suggests,* be an object of curious inquiry to ascertain whether this be indeed the last relic of pillar-worship now remaining in Europe, and especially whether any further trace of it is to be found in any other portion of the British dominions. The stones themselves, we know, exist in abundance; but are there remaining instances of superstitious regard being paid to them?

NINETEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

JEREMIAH.—JER. I. 1.

Four miles north-east of Jerusalem, we at this day find a poor village called Anata. In this we recognize the ancient Anathoth, one of the towns allotted to the priests, and the name of which occurs repeatedly in Scripture. Mean as the place is now, it was then a walled town, and its ruins still afford some traces of its ancient importance.

Here was born the prophet Jeremiah, and this was the place of his usual residence,—the near neighborhood of which to Jerusalem sufficiently explains his frequent appearance in the metropolis, the distance being no more than an easy morning walk.

He was a priest, and his father's name was Hilkiah. He commenced his prophetic ministry when very young, in the time of king Josiah; and as the high-priest, who found the

* In a communication, of which the above is (with some additional facts) mainly an abstract inserted in the No. for February 7, 1852, of a meritorious literary publication, called *Notes and Queries*.

book of the law in that reign, bore that name, some have thought that Jeremiah was his son. But there is no other foundation for this than the name, which was a common one among the Jews; and if the father of Jeremiah had really been high-priest, the fact would, in all probability, have been indicated when he is mentioned.

The extreme youth of Jeremiah when he was called to the high and perilous office of a prophet, is shown by the length of the period during which he exercised its functions, and also by the pleas of youth and incapacity which he modestly urged, when the voice of the Lord called him to be "a prophet unto the nations." Smitten by the sense of the solemn duties which his commission imposed, his gentle nature shrunk from them, as unsuited to his degree of strength, and he cried with deep emotion, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child." But when he was shown that the strength in which he was to act and speak was not his own, and that he might always reckon upon supplies of grace and strength to discharge the high duties to which he was called, he no longer sought to evade them; and although the influence of his natural temper breaks out at times in complaints that he, of all men most unsuited, as he thought, had been chosen for the place he filled, and in sighings for that retired and peaceful life he must know no more,—he fulfilled his tasks with unremitting diligence and unswerving fidelity for at least forty-two years, reckoning from the thirteenth year of king Josiah. In the course of his ministry he met with much opposition and ill-treatment from his countrymen of all classes, especially of the highest. The exigencies of the times constrained him, as the commissioned prophet of the Lord, to take a part in, or rather to exercise an important influence upon, the public policy of the time; and the part he took, though based on the most enlarged views of true patriotism, and on the most exact apprehension of the nation's only safe and wise course in the circumstances of the times, was offensive to its natural pride; and the great ones, seeing how adverse his counsels were to their own plans of aggrandizement, affected to discredit his mission, and strove to destroy his influ-

ence. His keen susceptibility to injustice and misconstruction, his deep sense of the wickedness, perversity, and ungodliness of men—his consciousness that the leaders of the people were, with wilful blindness, hurrying the nation with headlong speed to its ruin—together with his painful perception of the unpopularity to which his faithful denunciations exposed him, and the general dislike with which he was regarded, all this occasionally drew from him, in the bitterness of his soul, expressions which some have found it hard to reconcile with his religious principles and his near intercourse with Heaven; but which considered with due regard to his natural temper, and all the circumstances of his position, will be found far more to demand our pity than our censure. Nay, there is none of the prophets with whom we contract an acquaintance so close and sympathizing, by virtue of those very indications of the natural temper and spirit of the man, which are permitted to ripple the surface of his prophetic career, and which enable us to recognize, in one so gifted from Heaven, a man and a brother. The cries by which he attests the frequent anguish of his spirit, find a response in our hearts. We pity him, feel for him, love him; and this is more than can be said with regard to Isaiah, whose prophetic rapture more absorbed the individual man, and left no room for any other than feelings of admiration and awe towards him; whereas Jeremiah enlists our personal interests towards him by his starts of natural passion, and speaks to our hearts in his wails of human pain. Hear him:—"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me."* And thus he expostulates with his Lord: "As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow Thee: neither have I desired the woful day; Thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before Thee. Be not a terror unto me," he fearfully adds, but instantly rises from this prostration of spirit, and, with holy confidence, exclaims, "Thou art my hope in the day of evil."† Sometimes the outbursts of

* Jer. xv. 10. † Jer. xvii. 16, 17.

his mental agony are awful: "Cursed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee, *making him very glad*. . . . Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?"* Sometimes he goes so far as to propose in his heart that he will no longer deliver those utterances which bring so much trouble upon him; but he then found that he lay under a constraining necessity superior to his own will:—"I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in his name: but his word was in my heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." And what was the cause of this deep discouragement? He does not leave us in the dark as to this; he tells us that he had heard "the defaming of many, fear on every side. . . . My familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him." This was well suited to dismay a man of Jeremiah's temper; but he again speedily comes back to his trust in God:—"But the Lord is with me." With him as what?—"as a mighty terrible One"†—terrible to the adversaries of His servants, and to the opposers of his word.

It is possible that, on some occasion, Jeremiah had, under the influence of such feelings as he so often expresses, been tempted to soften or to suppress some part of a message entrusted to him, which he deemed likely to excite that violent antagonism which was grievous to his peaceful temper. The man who had confessedly purposed not to speak at all, might think of withholding part of the words entrusted to him. This supposition would give added force to the injunction which, on one occasion, he received:—"Speak *all* the words that I command thee to speak unto them. *Diminish not a word*."‡ So here also he found that there was no discretion left to him.

In the Lamentations, the same prophet speaks generally in the person of afflicted Zion, but we still recognize the man

* Jer. xx 14, 15, 18. † Jer. xx. 9–11. ‡ Jer. xxvi. 2.

Jeremiah, and trace his own experiences, and the tone of his own mind, in them. We must not multiply instances. Here is one:—"I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice; hide not thine ear AT MY BREATHING, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: Thou saidst, Fear not."*

NINETEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE LATTER RAIN.—JEREMIAH III. 3.

It is clearly the view proposed to us in the prophecies of Jeremiah, that the state of the land in regard to fertility or abundance depended on the conduct of the people. This is in strict conformity with the principle laid down in the Law of Moses; but there is no sacred writer, by whom these principles are so pointedly applied, as by Jeremiah. It is he who estimates the duration of the captivity which he foretold by the number of Sabbatic years, in which the land had not been allowed its appointed rest.† But a less noticed, though scarcely less striking, instance occurs in the third chapter, where, after animadverting on the offences and aberrations of the people, he says: "Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there has been no latter rain."

Writers and travellers have labored to explain, from the present state of the country and climate, what we must understand to be meant by the Scriptural designation of the early and the latter rains. But it seems not to have occurred to them, that "the latter rain," which we know to have been formerly essential to the beauty of the country and the fruitfulness of the seasons, may have been altogether withholden; and hence the comparative barrenness and sterility in which the land now lies, and which, for the most part, give to it an aspect but little in accordance with the ancient accounts of its teeming productiveness and delightful richness. It is usual to

* Lam. iii. 55–57. † 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

account for this by the reduced population, and the neglect of culture. Something may be allowed for this; but it will not account for all the difference. This may be the effect rather than the cause. It may be that cultivation is kept down (and, consequently, the population also), from some disadvantageous change in the conditions of the climate and the seasons. If, for the offences of the people, the latter rain was withholden in the time of Jeremiah, why should it not be so now, for those offences which have rendered the people outcasts in other lands? This condition in which the country should lie, is not obscurely prophesied; and is, indeed, constantly implied in those predictions of the eventual restoration of the ancient fertility which is placed among the prospects of a happy future.

Indeed, when we compare the passage before us with that remarkable text wherein "the rain in its due season—the first and the latter rain,"* are made contingent on the faithfulness of the people—the fact assumes the relation of cause and effect; and if it appears that there has been any intermission of these rains, we can be at no loss regarding the conclusion we should reach.

This is a question of fact; and respecting this we have as competent testimony as we could desire—that of Mr. Lowthian, who went to Palestine, under some religious impressions with reference to that country, with the view of making agricultural experiments, or of forming an agricultural settlement in Lebanon. This purpose necessarily gave such special directness to his observation on the physical condition of the climate, the seasons, and the soil—as renders his testimony on the subject of far more value than the observations of passing travellers.

"As I travelled from Jaffa to Jerusalem," he says, "over

* "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart, and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain, and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat, and be full."—Deut. xi. 13-15.

some as fine soil as could be found anywhere . did not see so much as one single blade of grass. This, to me, seemed very strange, for I knew that in England grass will grow where nothing else will; and here, neither among the fine stubble fields, nor even along the roadside where no plough comes, was to be found so much as might, with strict propriety, be called a blade of grass. This is something very astonishing. Not having seen this taken notice of in any book of travels that I have read, I cannot help thinking that surely I must be the first English farmer who has paid a visit to this land. Upon my arrival at Jerusalem, and perceiving that all the milk that was brought into the city in one day, for about 24,000 inhabitants, did not exceed ten or twelve quarts,—and that even that small quantity was only goat's milk, well watered,—and that I could find no honey, but a small piece which I had the pleasure of tasting while taking tea with the bishop's chaplain, I could not but exclaim to myself, How completely have God's judgments been executed on this devoted land! And most clearly did I perceive that the natural cause of all this evil was the want of seasonable rain. Rain, which waters the earth, and blesses it with fertility, God has withheld, and thus brought all these evils, and many more which I need not stay to enumerate, upon the land which 'flowed with milk and honey.'"

This view of the case, Mr. Lowthian substantiates by a particular and very interesting explanation. The "former rain" he considers to be the winter rain; and this, he states, "is so uncertain, that it sometimes does not come before January,—in consequence of which water becomes so exceedingly scarce and dear, that the inhabitants are put to great inconvenience and loss. And as neither planting nor sowing can be proceeded with until the rain makes the earth soft, the harvest is thrown back, for it is mostly in March or April that the crop is gathered in. After that the latter rain used to come, by which it is more than probable, nay, almost certain, that a second crop was produced; *but the latter rain is now entirely withheld*, and none is ever expected to fall in the time of the

summer. On this account the best part of the year is lost; and no vegetable can grow or keep alive, but those plants whose roots penetrate deep into the earth. It is well known to farmers, that if grass seed were carried from England and sown in that land, the very first summer would kill the whole of it. To such a well-known fact I appeal as a corroboration of my view respecting the withholding of the latter rain. God has, as it were, turned the key upon the refreshing and fructifying bounties of the skies. He has commanded the clouds that they rain no more upon the inheritance of his disobedient people. The latter rain is withheld, and with it the grass of the field, which, being lost to the cattle, the milk is consequently taken away. Neither can the flowers, from which the industrious bee extracts honey, blow and yield their sweets. All these are evils resulting from the want of sufficient rain."

With reference to the hills and mountains, the desolation of which is still more striking, and which has caused many a writer to say: "Is it possible that those bare rocks should ever have been covered with grass?" Mr. Lowthian remarks, that these rocky mountains take up the greater part of the land, and he cannot believe that the plains—let them be shown to be ever so fertile—could yield sustenance sufficient for the great number of inhabitants once supported in the land; and it appears to him, that here also the taking away of the latter rains from these mountains would make them just what they are: "As, for instance, if any of the high mountains of Cumberland, which are covered with grass from the top to the bottom, were placed under a hot burning sun from April to November, the consequence would be, that all the grass would be killed, as well as every other plant whose roots do not penetrate very deep. The grass being taken away, there would be nothing by which the soil might be bound or kept together; so that it would be, when thus pulverized, easily blown away by the high winds, and washed down into the valleys or into the sea by heavy rains. This being repeated year after year, the bare rock would soon become visible, and at last this grass-

bearing mountain would be brought into the very state in which the rocky elevations of the Holy Land now are. But as we are taught to believe, from the Word of God, that these mountains are again to be clothed with grass, it may be a question of doubt with some, How is it to be brought about, and how are they to be again covered with soil? To this I answer, that it requires no other miracle than the restoration of the rain in its due season; for let these hills and mountains only receive a regular moistening with the rain, and situated as they are under a fine warm climate, they would soon begin to present signs of something like vegetation,—and that vegetation, taking hold of the rock with its roots, would preserve it from being blown or washed away; and the blade or leaf, dying or rotting upon the place, would soon create a rich and fertile soil."

NINETEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

HEWING DOWN TREES.—JEREMIAH VI. 6.

It is observable, that in predicting military operations against Jerusalem or other places, the processes described are always in conformity with the usages of the foreseen besiegers, and not with those of the Jews themselves. This extends even to the weapons and the personal appearance of the besiegers, and to their distinctive national characters, although these are facts which often could not well have been known from ordinary information by those who gave the descriptions and uttered the prophecies. This we have repeatedly had occasion to show in our Readings in Isaiah, and it will again come often under our notice.

It will be observed, that the military proceedings to which chiefly the prophecies of Jeremiah have reference, are those of the Babylonians—whose usages, at least in war, are now less known to us than those of any other great foreign nation mentioned conspicuously in Scripture—from the connection of their

history with that of the Jews. We know, indeed, more of the ancient Babylonians historically than of the Assyrians and the Persians, though less so than of the Egyptians; but this knowledge has reference chiefly to their political history and their social institutions and condition, whereas the sculptures which have been found in the palaces and temples of the other nations bring their warriors bodily before us, acquaint us with the details of their military proceedings, and disclose to us all the circumstances of regal life. This is an advantage for the illustration of Scripture, in which these nations are brought before us under those very aspects—as warriors, invaders, besiegers—which the nations themselves have delighted to record, and which nations do still delight to record, in their marbles. It suggests some painful reflections, that the art whose monuments are the most enduring has been, and is still, mainly consecrated to the registration of man's strife with man, and his homicidal violences against his brother: and the people of future times may dig up out of the mounds of ruin which may then mark the sites where the great cities of Europe now flourish, monuments of the same essential purpose and character as those which we now discover among the remains of the world's ancient capitals. Man has been in all time anxious to record the fulfilment of the prevision which the archangel is, by the poet, represented as affording to the first of men:—

> "For in those days might only shall be admir'd,
> And valor and heroic virtue call'd.
> To overcome in battle, and subdue
> Nations, and bring home spoil, with infinite
> Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
> Of human glory; and for glory done
> Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors,
> Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods;
> Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
> Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth;
> And what most merits fame in silence hid."
>
> *Paradise Lost*, b. xi.

These old sculptures do now, however, in the providence of God, subserve purposes but little contemplated by those who

caused them to be wrought as monuments of their own greatness; they serve to illustrate the Scripture, and to confirm its authority and truth against all gainsayers, by furnishing the pictorial realities of written facts and descriptions, and thus evincing the minute accuracy of the sacred writers; by enabling us to perceive that the condition of the ancient contemporary nations was such as these writers describe; by making clear to our apprehension matters that were formerly obscure, by reason of our imperfect knowledge of ancient times; and by the record of facts which have already helped much, and, it may be hoped, will soon help much more, to the understanding of some parts of the Scripture narrative: thus altogether adding materially to the constantly-increasing stores of information which, from year to year, gather around the Bible, and render that Divine book, contrary to all others, the more intelligible and the better understood the older it becomes.

We have said that Babylon is, in a great measure, an exception to this statement, especially as regards military affairs. But we are strongly persuaded that this will not much longer be the case. The mounds of Babylon probably hold in their womb monuments and records no less important, perhaps more important, than those which have, after thousands of years, been discovered in the mounds of Nineveh; and we confidently expect that many years will not pass before these also are made to yield up their hidden treasures for the illustration of the sacred volume. Meanwhile, we must be content to believe, as is in every way probable, from the near neighborhood and close connection of the two places and nations, that their usages in public life, in matters of state and of war, were exceedingly similar, if not identical; and that hence the sculptures of Nineveh may be safely and freely cited to illustrate the Babylonian customs and practices, which the sacred historians and prophets bring under our notice.

More than one instance for which this process is available occurs in the sixth chapter of Jeremiah. In the 6th verse, the prophet, referring to the future siege of Jerusalem by the

Babylonians, says: "Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem." In all ancient sieges, even in those conducted by the Jews themselves, so early as the time of Moses, trees in the neighborhood of the besieged cities were unsparingly cut down by the besiegers, to aid in filling up ditches and in the construction of mounds and embankments, and of towers and military engines. It is, however, a beautiful incident in the law of Moses, that the destruction of fruit-trees for any such purpose is strongly interdicted.* The importance of this is felt, when we recollect how much larger a proportion of man's subsistence than in our climates is in the East derived from fruit-bearing trees—whence the destruction of such trees is, among the Syro-Arabian nations, regarded as something of a sacrilege.

It is related that, in one of his wars, Mohammed cut down the date-trees of the Beni Nadi (a tribe of Jews in Arabia). This act must have been viewed with abhorrence even by his own followers, for he found it advisable to produce a pretended revelation from heaven sanctioning the deed:—"This revelation came down: What palm-trees ye cut down, or left standing on their roots, were so cut down or left by the will of God, that he might disgrace the evil-doers."† Plutarch says there was a similar regulation against the destruction of fruit-trees among the Egyptians; and this is so far confirmed that we do not find any fruit-trees among those which are represented as hewn down in military operations. Other nations were less scrupulous, and among them the Assyrians (and doubtless the Babylonians also); for in at least one instance, we have noticed a palm-tree being cut down outside the walls

* "When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life), to employ them in the siege: Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued."—Deut. xx. 19, 20.

† *Koran*, chap. lix *Mischat ul Masabih.*

of a besieged city. Perhaps this may impart an emphasis to the mention of the hewing down of trees here by the prophet; and we incline to think it may be still more distinctly alluded to in Isaiah vii. 19, where the wasting of foreign invaders being represented under the symbol of flies and bees (with a special reference in the latter to the Assyrians), it is said in conclusion that they shall rest (destructively) upon "all thorns, and upon all bushes," which latter term is, in the margin, rendered by "commendable trees," and is generally taken to mean cultivated trees—that is, fruit-trees, as distinguished from wild timber-trees. Barnes translates it by "shrubbery of pleasure," to which we somewhat demur, though rather to the term than the essential signification. Even so, however, as indeed in every other application, this denunciation has been remarkably accomplished at Jerusalem, the neighborhood of which had become so entirely divested of trees in the course of the successive sieges to which it had been exposed, that the later besiegers had to fetch the timber required from a long distance. Josephus expressly records the destruction of trees by the Romans—Titus, indeed, commencing his proceedings by levelling all the orchards and gardens between the hill Scopas and the city, to clear the ground for his operations. No doubt this destruction of trees was repeated in subsequent sieges. Certain it is, that when the crusaders under Godfrey commenced their siege, no timber could be found for the construction of their engines. William of Tyre* declares that the district was altogether destitute of wood, and describes the Christian princes as greatly perplexed, until at length a native Christian offered to show them a low valley, from three to four leagues distant, where they would find what they needed. A proper force was accordingly despatched to the place, with a number of hewers and carpenters. The trees even here, however, were small, and little suited to the purpose for which they were required. There was, however, nothing better to be had; so they were cut down and removed, at great expense and labor, to the camp, where several engines of different kinds were

* *De Bell. Sac.* lib. viii. cap. 6.

made with them for assaulting the walls. This circumstance illustrates both the need of timber in assaulting walled towns, and the great scarcity of it which repeated sieges had produced in the neighborhood of Jerusalem.

Twentieth Week.—Sunday.

THE OLD PATHS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

The time of Jeremiah was eminently a time of conflict between opposing influences and principles,—so that the minds of the people were agitated and perplexed, and many felt as if they knew not what course it behooved them to take; while many made the difficulty of discerning the right course their excuse for taking the wrong one. To meet this case this message came; as sufficient for all guidance this rule was given: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

The case assumed is that of a traveller, who, on his journey, finds himself at the opening of many ways, and knows not with any assurance which of them leads to his resting-place, or which of them will bring him thither by the most direct and the safest road. The place which he seeks is a most ancient city, the way to which men have traversed in all ages. That fresh foot-path through the flowery meadows—that bridle-path round by the marshes—this fresh cutting through the hills;—these will not do for him; he must ask for the *old* path. But there may be more old paths than one. The broad and pleasant way that leadeth to destruction, is as old as, and far better frequented than the strait road that leadeth unto life. It is, therefore, necessary to seek not only "the old path," but "the good way." Although every old way may not be good, the good way is certainly old; if, therefore, the travel-

ler finds and follows the way that is both old and good, he is safe—he shall without fail reach his home at last, and "find rest to his soul."

As this last expression occurs only in one other place, the mind is carried forward to our Saviour's invitation: "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, ... and ye shall find *rest to your souls*." And to come, is not to come *to* Him, but *by* Him; for again, He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

There was never yet found, and never will be found, any way of rest or safety for the soul, but by Him. And this is the old way. The apostle, indeed, calls it "a new and living way," —(Heb. x. 20)—as having then received new and fuller illustration; yet it is a way as old as the Fall, as old as the Creation: and, indeed, in the purpose and foreknowledge of God, older than the Creation. There is no older way than this, nor any so safe; there is no other, indeed, that is safe. It was not then, when the apostle wrote, a way newly opened, for it existed before all time; nor was it then newly revealed, for it had been made known to man so soon as he had fallen; nor was it then newly made use of, for all the Old Testament saints were saved by the same grace of Christ, and justified by his righteousness, and their sins pardoned through his blood, and expiated by his sacrifice—the same as those who have lived under the New Testament. In those latter days this ancient path had been more clearly shown and more fully opened up —just as now many an old road is opened up to the sun and air, by the removal of the dense foliage that grew on either side and met overhead, admitting only here and there some stray beams of the sun, and allowing only a few glimpses of the clear blue sky. In all time there is but one way of salvation; there never was any other, and never will be. It is therefore our course, as it was formerly, still to inquire for the old path, the good old way, the pleasant way of Christ.

It is not difficult to find. It has been opened up, cleared

and le...led; way-marks have been set up for every step to be taken in it; and in the Scriptures we are provided with a chart of the road, which never yet misled any who turned to it, with a full and earnest purpose to be guided by its indications.

But we may be told to see what differences there are among Christians as to the road, who yet have all this same chart for their guidance, and who all declare that they follow its directions. Well; but it is not so. They agree much more than they differ; and, after all, it is not so much about the way itself that they disagree, for that is very plain, as about the stones with which the way is paved, the length or shortness of the way, or the medicinal qualities of the plants that grow by the wayside.

If men would read their Bibles with meekness and modesty, and study the sacred pages with honest diligence, we should be soon perfectly agreed in all things necessary to salvation, and belonging to the way of life; and, for the rest, we may entertain different notions, and yet rest safe and quiet, and it would signify little whether such controversies were ever settled. When our eternal state seems to be brought into peril and doubt; when the public peace is broken, and the order of Christ's church disturbed; when private friendships are torn asunder, and grievous misunderstandings arise among those who are the fellow-heirs of the promises, these are not the effects merely of allowable differences of opinion, but of indiscretion, of intemperate heat, and bitter zeal. Whoever examines the rise and growth of dangerous heresies and schisms, will find that their root is more generally in the abuse of knowledge than in the want of it. In short, God has done for us as much as became Him, and as much as we needed. All necessary truth He has made plain and obvious; and He will not call us to severe account for our mistakes and ignorances in lesser matters: and, therefore, although all may deceive themselves in points unessential, yet only they shall have to sustain his fiery indignation who fully deceive themselves in the face of the light He has given to our path, or who labor to pervert

and disturb others in their quiet and happy walk along the old path, the good way, that leads them to the true and only rest for their souls.

TWENTIETH WEEK—MONDAY.

ANCIENT CRUELTIES.—JEREMIAH VI. 23.

The prophet, in the course of his description of the intended invaders of the land, emphatically declares, that "they are cruel, and have no mercy."

It was the lot of Jeremiah to live to record the fulfilment of some of his predictions, and of this among the rest. It is clear from his account, as well as from the harrowing detail, in the Lamentations, that the capture of Jerusalem was attended with the utmost barbarities that ancient warfare inflicted upon the inhabitants of a city taken by storm. It may be said, however, that these cruelties were committed in hot blood, and are not materially different in kind from those which have in all ages been the doom of a town taken in the like circumstances. If, under the perfect discipline of modern armies, it has often been found beyond the power of the officers, even when they earnestly desired it, to restrain the infuriated soldiers from giving full vent to their most brutal passions and destructive impulses, how must it have been in the case of ancient oriental armies, with their looser discipline, their *habitual* disregard of human life, and their customary delight in human suffering; their naturally fiercer passions, and fainter habits of self-restraint!—and with all these propensities, not only unopposed, but usually, in the case of a conquered town, sanctioned and even stimulated by their commanders! We cannot call to mind an instance in ancient oriental warfare of any attempt made by the officers to restrain the soldiers in the case of a city taken by storm. We may find Roman instances; but even the rigorous discipline of the Roman armies seldom sufficed to put any effectual restraint upon the troops. It is well known, for instance, that Titus was most anxious to preserve the tem

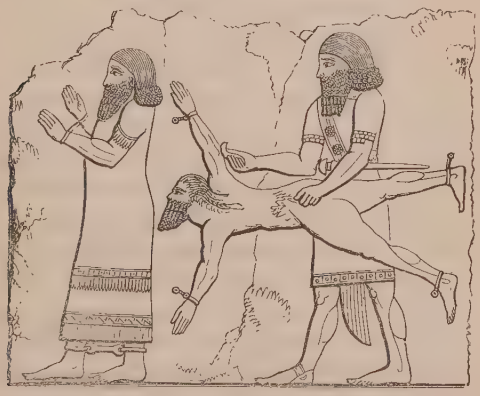
ple at Jerusalem, but that, in the face of his strictest injunctions and urgent entreaties, it was wilfully fired by the soldiers.

The temper of a nation is not to be tested by the proceedings of its warriors on such occasions, so much as by the indications of character and habit, which are offered in times of peace, of cool blood, of deliberate action; or by the details of preparation and purpose before war commences, or the treatment of captives after it is over. Judged by these tests, the Babylonians, as well as the As-yrians, may be easily shown to have been a people cruel and without mercy.

Whatever be the atrocities of modern European warfare in hot blood, there is probably no state which would deliberately arrange for the infliction of needless pain and suffering upon the enemy. We lately saw some correspondence in the papers about new guns and new shot; and an officer wrote with the evident feeling of one expecting the general concurrence of military authorities in an objection which he took to the latter, that the wound inflicted by such shot must be incurable,—and, he urged, it could be the desire of no one to inflict incurable wounds upon those of the enemy who might survive an action. Now, we have no hesitation in declaring, that this quality of a weapon, which is adduced as a ground for its exclusion from our warfare, would have been the highest recommendation of it to the ancient nations we have in view, and, indeed—we fear that we must say—to most existing nations of the East. Again, we can call to mind that nothing in early life shocked us so much, in the accounts we read of the Spanish Armada, as the deliberate pre-determined purpose of after-persecution and cruelty, implied in the presence of the instruments of torture found on board the captured vessels. But this, at which the mind revolts so strongly, is quite in unison with ancient oriental habits and character. In fact, the conception is oriental, and might be traced to the influence which the long-enduring dominion of the Arabs in Spain imparted no less to the ideas and habits than to the language of the people.

To substantiate, in the principles we have indicated, the

character which the prophet gives to the Chaldeans, it might suffice to call to mind the refinement of barbarity with which the king Zedekiah was treated by Nebuchadnezzar, some time after the capture of Jerusalem. He slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, with no other object, apparently, than to rend his heart; and his own eyes were then torn out, that this blasting sight might be his *last* and most enduring visual remembrance. This scene has been vividly presented to our senses by the sculptured representations of similar circumstances in the remains of Nineveh. In one instance, to which we have already referred,* the king, with his own spear, thrusts out the eyes of a kneeling captive, and holds with his own hand the cord, which is inserted into the lip and nostrils of this and two other prisoners. Thus afflicted, ruined, and shorn of life's uses, the poor king, with bleeding eyes, was sent off, bound in fetters of brass, to Babylon, where he was kept in prison to the day of his death. This also is brought before us by the Assyrian sculptures, where we find a person, manifestly of rank, thus fettered and manacled; and the very same slab exhibits a still greater atrocity in a captive being actually repre-



sented as flayed alive! The executioner has begun with a curved knife to remove the skin from the back of the man's

* Evening Series: Fifteenth Week—Saturday.

arm; and this takes place in the presence of the king, to whom the sufferer's face is turned as if imploring pardon. This fact of the king's presence is probably always to be understood when any kind of punishment is said to have been ordered by the king, or executed by him. This is the case at the present day in Persia, for instance, where every sentence pronounced, whether of death, mutilation, or bastinado, is executed upon the spot in his presence. This practice is deemed by the Persians essential to the maintenance of the royal authority. It adds, they contend, very materially to the impression of terror which they think should be made upon the turbulent and refractory classes of the community. This no doubt forms part of the education which renders the best of kings revoltingly indifferent to human life and suffering. It is reported of the king (Futteh Ali Shah) who reigned in Persia during the greater part of the present century, that he was naturally a humane man, and when he first came to the throne, felt himself obliged to turn aside his head when an execution took place. But as this is regarded by the Persians not only as unkingly, but as an unmanly weakness, the monarch strove to conquer it, and custom soon inured him to look calmly on.

Persia, indeed, the only one of the ancient eastern kingdoms which still subsists, does, more than any other country, exhibit usages of state and aspects of regal life analogous to those ascribed in Scripture to eastern kings, as well as to those which the sculptures of the Assyrian and other eastern nations offer. The chief difference is in war, the use of fire-arms having necessarily effected there, as everywhere else, great changes in military operations. The treatment which Zedekiah experienced from the Babylonians, as well as the Assyrian analogies to which we have referred, may, for instance, be compared with that of the emperor Valerian by the Persian king Shapur, who is reported not only to have detained his royal captive in hopeless bondage, but to have paraded him in chains, invested with the imperial purple, as a constant spectacle of fallen greatness, to the multitude; and it is added, that whenever the proud conqueror mounted his horse, he placed his foot upon the neck

of the Roman emperor. Nor is this all; for when Valerian sank under the weight of his shame and grief, his corpse was flayed, and the skin, stuffed with straw, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia. Gibbon relates these facts with some expression of incredulity. But they were in good part confirmed by the sculptures (at Shapur in Persia), in which the triumph of this king over the Romans is commemorated; and still more by the light which has been cast upon the savagery of ancient eastern nations, by the atrocities represented in their sculptures, and in none more than in those of Assyria, and such as we shall probably soon find in those of Babylon. In fact, nothing is in itself more illustrative of the truth of the character given to the eastern conquerors by the prophet than the existence of such representations. To perpetuate in marble, and to parade in palaces of state, barbarities at which nature shudders, and which, if committed even in hot blood, a right-minded people would seek to bury in oblivion—do most emphatically mark the state of civilization which had been attained by any nation that could suffer its glory to be *thus* perpetuated.

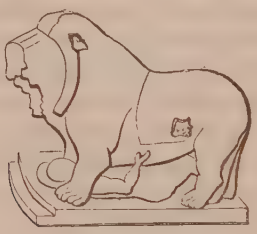
TWENTIETH WEEK—TUESDAY.

THE RAVENOUS BIRD.—JEREMIAH VI. 22; L. 42.

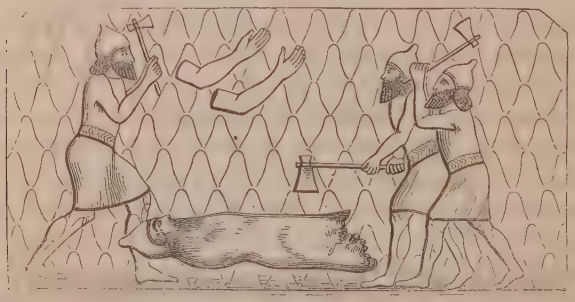
It is a noticeable fact that we have Scripture authority—and that too, the authority of Jeremiah himself—for including the Persians especially in our illustrations of mercilessness. For the prophet, in foretelling the eventual fall of Babylon herself, declares, the "people from the north," that is, the Persians who are to execute the Lord's sentence upon her, —"are cruel, and will not show mercy;" giving them in fact, precisely the same character in this respect, which he had previously given to the Babylonians themselves.

But we have not yet done with the Babylonians—wishing to direct attention to a few more examples of the kind which we yesterday described to be truly illustrative of a people's

character. In considering this subject, the mind instantly reverts to the singular instances of Babylonian cruelty which the book of Daniel offers: the being cast alive into "burning fiery furnaces,' and into dens of lions, and the being hewn in pieces —all, for such offences as refusing to worship a golden image, for praying to any God but the king, or for speaking "anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed nego." The two former punishments are unique, so far as we



know; and it is remarkable, that the only piece of oriental antiquity in which anything like a lion's den appears, is in a coin of Babylon. One of the very few pieces of sculpture found at Babylon, however, represents a lion standing over the prostrate body of a man. An engraved gem also represents a man combating with or subduing two lions; and at Shus (Susa), not far from the tomb of Daniel, a bas-relief has been found, representing two lions, each with a paw upon the head of a man half-naked,



with his hands bound behind him. Of hewing in pieces we have a representation in Assyrian sculpture, where three men

are represented as hacking a prostrate figure to pieces with hatchets, having already separated the arms. It has indeed been suggested, that this is the image of some god, composed of precious metal: if so, it would be a good illustration of the maltreatment of conquered idols. But we rather believe it to be a human being, because men do not cut up metal with axes, and because the scene is not in any town, or near any temple, but in a wild hilly country, where an important captive might be taken, but where men do not set up the precious images of their gods.

There is, however, another instance of Babylonian cruelty which has been less noticed. In describing the atrocities which the Babylonians had committed on and after the taking of Jerusalem, the prophet says, "Princes were hanged up by their hand."—Lam. v. 10. Some understand this as meaning, that they were hanged by the hands of the Chaldeans; others, that they laid violent hands upon themselves, as not being able to bear the hardship and disgrace to which they were subjected. There are objections to both these interpretations, and especially to the latter, seeing that the Jews were not addicted to suicide under affliction, and that we are expressly told that the princes were slain by the king of Babylon at Riblah, at the same time that Zedekiah received his punishment. This text, however, more probably refers to the *mode* of execution. Gill says, "I should rather think this to be understood of hanging them, not by the neck, but by the hand, could any instance be given of such a kind of punishment, so early used, and by this people, which has been in other nations, and in more modern times." These conditions are too rigid. He is alluding, probably, to the tortures of the Inquisition, and not to modern eastern customs. And that a peculiar punishment existed in the East now, is a good argument for its former existence. Besides, any one who examines the sculpture of the Assyrians, will doubt that any mode, practicable to them, of inflicting torturing death or punishment, had escaped the cruel ingenuity of this people. The peculiar species of impalement to which we have already had occasion to refer is in this respect analogically illustrative. Be

this as it may, "no punishment," as Mr. Roberts reports, in his Oriental Illustrations, "is more common than this in the East, especially for slaves and refractory children. Thus, has a master an obstinate slave—has he committed some great offence with his hands—several men are called, who tie the offender's hands, and hoist him from the roof till he begs forgiveness. School-boys who are in the habit of playing truant are also thus punished. To tell a man you will hang him by the hands, is extremely provoking. See, then, the lamentable condition of the princes; they were 'hanged up by their hands' as common slaves."

In reference to the analogous character given to the Persians, it is remarkable, that in the parallel prophecy of Isaiah (xlvi. 11), their leader, as representative of the army, is characterized as a "ravenous bird from the east." There may perhaps be an allusion little suspected in this. In the Assyrian sculptures we constantly see birds of prey hovering over and accompanying the army, especially near the person of the king or chief, being apparently trained for the purpose. Sometimes we see these birds contending with the wounded, as eagles and falcons, when contending with large and powerful prey, at once attack the eyes of their victims; sometimes they are represented as flying off with the entrails of the slain; and sometimes as bearing off their heads, which have been cut off by the captors.

In one instance of the king's triumphal procession after victory, the royal chariot is preceded by minstrels, and by soldiers carrying a head in each hand; while an eagle hovers above the chariot, as if taught to take a part in the ovation, bearing a head in its claws. This may obviously suggest that the Persians were similarly attended by "ravenous birds;" and hence the special emphasis of the designation used by the prophet. This is rendered the more probable, from the fact that this custom of training birds of prey for aggression, has been preserved to a very recent period. Chardin gives a particular account of the mode in which powerful fal-

cons were, in Persia, trained to assist in the chase, by flying at the heads of even large animals, beating their eyes out with their wings, and rending them with beak and claws, so as to retard and confuse the flight even of animals too large and powerful to be killed by them. They were trained to this by their food being fastened to the heads of stuffed figures, mounted on wheels, of the creatures they were designed to be employed against, so that they learned to fly at animals of the same kind whenever they saw them in motion. Chardin goes on to say, that down to the commencement of the preceding century [the sixteenth], it was usual to train these birds to attack men in this manner; and he was informed that birds so trained were still kept in the royal falconry. These birds, if not quickly recalled by the voice, or by a small drum used for the purpose, became so excited that the call was not heeded by them, and nothing could prevent them from continuing to tear the face of their victim with the utmost inveteracy. The traveller had seen nothing of this himself; but he had heard that Ali Khouli Khan, governor of Tauris, with whom he had been himself particularly acquainted, had been much addicted to this dangerous and cruel diversion,—even flying the birds at his friends, but taking care to recall them in time to prevent serious harm. It happened one day, however, that having let loose a bird upon a young gentleman, and not being sufficiently quick in calling him off, the bird tore out his eyes, and he died of the injury and fright. When the king heard of this, his displeasure was great; and the incident contributed much to the disgrace into which this nobleman soon after fell.* It may be doubted whether the king's displeasure was not more awakened by the khan's encroachment on a royal prerogative, than at the barbarity of the deed.

* *Voyages de Chevalier Chardin, in Perse et autres Lieux de l'Orient*, tom iii. p. 396–7. Ed. Langles, Paris, 1811.

TWENTIETH WEEK--WEDNESDAY.

FUNERAL FEASTS.—JEREMIAH XVI. 4–7.

In the sixteenth chapter of his prophecies, Jeremiah draws a mournful picture of the miseries and desolations that hung over his country. Among other doleful details, he indicates the extent of mortality from the sword and famine, by the significant intimation that the ordinary forms of mourning at the occurrence of deaths would cease. So many would perish, that death would become familiar; so many would die that the customary solemnities of grief could not be maintained by the survivors. "They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth." And again: "They shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them: Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall they give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother."

The horror of the dead remaining unburied, is here and elsewhere strongly produced by Jeremiah. This must have been the more abhorrent to the Jews, as the law of Moses trained them into the habit of seeing that all who died should in due time be buried, by attaching a social and religious disqualification of ceremonial "uncleanness" to the merest contact with a corpse; so that the greatest malefactors were not refused the rights of sepulture; and we learn from Ezekiel xxxix. 15, that great pains were taken by this people to inter all the bodies of the slain, on both sides, after any battle. It was held, indeed, that the sacred land was defiled by the bodies of the slain remaining exposed upon its surface. This horror and ignominy of remaining unburied was not confined to the Jews; we meet with it continually in classical antiquity, and it seems to be founded on the notion that the ghosts of those whose bodies had not obtained the honors of sepulture, were doomed to

wander for a hundred years upon the ark river of death (Styx), before being allowed to pass to the regions beyond.*

Of cutting the flesh as an act of grief, and also as an act of frantic excitement, we have already spoken.† It only remains to remark, that traces of this custom may be found in all parts of the world, so that it would seem to be founded on a natural rather than a conventional sentiment, although it is difficult to define its exact nature, and our present duty does not require us to attempt its analysis. To inflict injury upon oneself would seem rather an act of compunction than of mere grief; and there may be something of this in it even as an act of mourning; for almost always with the natural grief for the loss of one, known and loved enough to be lamented with deep emotion, some feelings of contrition must ever mingle, as avenging memory brings back the ungenerous thought, the churlish word, the misinterpreted or unrequited kindness, which must cast their cloud over the brightest recollections of the loved and lost.

The "making themselves bald," by cutting or shaving the hair of the head is often mentioned in Scripture; and we have made some slight allusion to it in noticing Job's expressions of grief.‡ This, as an act of grief, has disappeared in a great measure from Western Asia. That it was forbidden to his followers by Mohammed is one reason; but a better is, that the men have no hair upon their heads that they can demolish, it being the universal custom to shave the hair of the head. The women, however, who continue to wear their hair long, do not, indeed, shave their heads, but often tear out their hair by handfuls on such occasions. Among the Greeks, who anciently, as now, wore their hair, the custom of tearing, cutting off, or shaving the hair, was at least as common as among the Jews. With them, the hair thus separated from the head was sometimes

* Hæc omnis, quam cernis, inops inhumataque turba est:
Centum errant annos, volitantque hæc litora circum:
Tum demum admissi stagna exoptata revisunt.—Æneid, vi. 325.

† Morning Series: Seventeenth Week—Saturday; and Forty-sixth Week—Friday.

‡ Evening Series: Third Week—Monday.

laid upon the corpse as a tribute of affection and regret; sometimes it was cast upon the funeral pile to be consumed with the remains of the deceased; and on other occasions it was laid upon the grave. In times of great public mourning this ceremony was extended even to the beasts; and on the deaths of men of high note, it was not unusual for whole cities to be shaven. These and other ideas and sentiments connected with the hair, owe their significance not only to the fact, that this is a graceful ornament to the body, the neglect or demolition of which, therefore, implies that disregard of ornament which properly belongs to grief, but that the hair is a living part of the body—part of a man's self, which yet may be separated without pain—and which has this peculiar quality, that it is not, like other parts of the body, subjected in the lapse of time to change or decay. It is this latter circumstance which causes the hair to be so much employed as a memorial of affection.

All is plain enough so far; but what shall we understand by the circumstance that "the cup of consolation" shall not be given even to one who has lost his father or his mother? clearly showing that it was given to mourners under ordinary circumstances. It appears from John xi. 19, that when tidings of a death went abroad, the friends of the family hastened to comfort and condole with the mourning relatives of the deceased. It is understood that on such occasions they offered them meat, and pressed them to drink, presuming that they were too much absorbed in grief to care of themselves for these things; and as usage indeed exacted, that during the three first days after the death, which were called the "days of weeping," the mourners should have no food prepared in their own house, nor eat anything of their own. It is alleged that during this period the friends presented the mourners with the choicest dainties and the finest wines, on the ground that they needed better than usual sustenance in their trouble,* and this has been supposed to be alluded to and sanctioned by Proverbs xxxi. 6; but this clearly does not refer to anything of the sort. The practice was, however, indicated in the apocryphal book of Tobit,† where

* Buxtor *Synag. Jud.* ch. 35. † Tobit iv. 17.

the somewhat self-righteous personage of that name is represented as enjoining his son Tobias, "Pour out thy bread in the burial of the just, but give nothing to the wicked." At the present day, among the Jews, friends do not act thus until after the funeral, which usually takes place much sooner than with us. It is then that the mourners first break the fast they are understood to have observed since the death took place. The relations all sit down upon the floor on their return from the funeral, and a chair is placed before them with a simple refection of eggs boiled hard, a little salt, and a small loaf, of which they all take a small portion. It is quite as probable that the text refers to some custom like this as to the other. But it is more usually supposed, that the succeeding clause rather relates to the entertainment following the funeral, whatever may have been its precise nature in ancient times. Indeed, the connection with what precedes seems to require some such interpretation: "Thou shalt not go to the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and drink." The term, "house of feasting," seems incongruous, but it simply means the house in which any kind of feast is held: and, in this case it is difficult to understand who the persons designated are, as those with whom he is not to eat and drink, unless the mourners and friends of the deceased to whom the antecedent passages bear reference. The fact of such a funeral feast seems to be well established on the authority of the old Rabbinical writers; but it is not agreed at what time it took place. It could not be till the close of the three days of weeping, and probably immediately followed, as an introduction on the part of the mourners to their customary habits of life. The entertainment was given by the chief mourner at his own house, if different from that in which the deceased dwelt; and to it were invited the friends of the deceased, and those kind neighbors who had supplied the family with food during the three days. These funeral feasts were conducted with all proper decorum, and care was taken to preclude indecent excess, as a decree of the Sanhedrim limited the quantity of wine to be drunk on such occasions.

We need not wonder at the existence of such funeral ban-

quets among the Jews, for they were celebrated among all ancient nations, and have been preserved in some quarters to the present time. We shall not refer to the often cited examples of this kind among the Greeks and Romans, but will rather note a few particulars which show that this custom of funeral banquets existed in this country, and is not yet wholly extinct. The instances are derived from Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, in which a large collection of like facts may be found under the head of "Funeral Entertainments."

Moresin tells us, that in his time these funeral feasts were so profuse in England, that it cost less to portion off a daughter than to bury a dead wife. These funeral entertainments are still kept up in the north of England, where they are called *arvals* or *arvils*, whence the bread distributed on these occasions is called "arvil-bread." Tracing this custom to the ancients, and remarking that such entertainments seem to have been designed to appease the ghosts of the dead, Brand adds, "The modern arvals, however, are intended to appease the appetites of the living, who have, upon these occasions, superseded the names of the dead." An allusion to these feasts occurs in Hamlet,—

> ——"*The funeral baked meats,*
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables."

Among the extracts from the Berkeley MSS., read before the Society of Antiquaries, was this: "From the time of the death of Maurice, the fourth Lord Berkeley, which happened June 8, 1368, untill his interment, the reeve of his mannor of Hinton, spent three quarters and seaven bushells of beanes in fatting one hundred geese towards his funerall, and divers other reeves of other manors the like, in geese, duckes, and other pultry."

In Dudley Lord North's *Forest of Varieties*, published in 1645, is the following: "Nor are all banquets (no more than music) ordained for merry humors, some being used even at funerals." It would seem, however, by comparing the dates of Brand's citations, that the custom must have declined during

the Commonwealth, for Richard Flecknoe, writing in 1665, speaks of funeral feasts as "quite left off," a phrase which, in itself, seems to express the recency of their discontinuance. In parts of Scotland, however, in Ireland, and in the Isle of Man, such feasts have been kept up to a much later date.

In the minute-book of the Society of Antiquaries, July 21, 1725, the following entry occurs: "Mr. Anderson gave the society an account of a Highland chief's funeral. The body is first put into a litter between two horses, and, attended by the whole clan, is brought to the place of burial in the churchyard. The nearest relations dig the grave, the neighbors having set out the ground so that it may not encroach upon the graves of others. While this is performing, *some hired women*, for that purpose, *lament the dead*, setting forth his genealogy and noble exploits. After the body is interred, a hundred black cattle and two hundred sheep are killed for the entertainment of the company."

Through the *Statistical Account of Scotland*, there are dispersed various notices of the retention of funeral feasting in different localities of that country, especially among the poor, who, in all countries, are the most tenacious retainers of old customs. We have room for only two. Under the parish of Lochbroom, county of Ross, we read: "At their burials and marriages the inhabitants too much adhere to the folly of their ancestors. On these occasions they have a custom of feasting a great number of their friends and neighbors, and this often at an expense which proves greatly to the prejudice of orphans and young people; although these feasts are seldom productive of any quarrels or irregularities among them." This is more than can be said for the Irish "Wakes." Under the parish of Carmunnock, county of Lanark, the minister states: "We must mention a custom which still prevails, and which certainly ought to be abolished. It is usual in this parish, as in many other parts of Scotland, when a death has taken place, to invite on such occasions the greater part of the country round; and though called to attend at an early hour in the forenoon, yet it is generally towards evening before they

think of carrying forth the corpse for interment. While, on these occasions, the good folks are assembled, though they never run into excess, yet no small expense is incurred by the family, who often vie with those around them in giving, as they call it, an honorable burial to their deceased friend. Such a custom is attended with many evils, and frequently involves in debt, or reduces to poverty, many families otherwise frugal and industrious, by this piece of useless parade and ill-judged expense."

TWENTIETH WEEK—THURSDAY.

FATHER-LAND.—JEREMIAH XXII. 10.

JEREMIAH is eminently the prophet, the historian, and the mourner of captivity—or rather of exile; for what is called captivity in the authorized version of the Scripture is really exile and nothing more, except in the case of a few persons of high station, who were sometimes, but not generally, kept under restraint. Captivity is the state of those who have been, by war, brought into an altered and subjugated condition; and so far it is properly applied to the state to which the Hebrew kingdoms were successively reduced. But the term has acquired the sense also of imprisonment, so that "captive" and "prisoner" are, in popular and poetical language, synonymous terms. But, in fact, a man may be a captive without being a prisoner; and hence, to us, the term "captivity," although in the strict sense proper, is apt to suggest a severer condition than it is actually intended to denote.

The object of the great Eastern conquerors in enforcing the removal of the people of conquered nations—a policy which appears to us so peculiar and remarkable—seems to have grown out of the vast extent of the empires these conquerors formed: for their distant provinces being thus beyond the immediate reach of the central power, and it being hence an onerous and expensive operation to move troops to reduce them in case of revolt, it became the obvious policy to weaken

those provinces, so as to render revolt impossible. This was effected by rooting up all local ties, and destroying all local influence and power, in the removal to other lands of the flower of the population—of all whose presence could give strength to a nation in war or in peace. The process was, in fact, that of denationalization: and how successful it was generally, is shown by the fact, that the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel, expatriated by the Assyrians, speedily lost their separate existence in the land of their exile, and have never since been found.

But the object of this policy was not only to weaken the extremities, by destroying their power of spontaneous action, but, in the same proportion, to strengthen the central force and prosperity of the empire, by bringing into it all the valuable parts of foreign populations. This object is clearly traced in the statement, that the successive deportations of the people of Judah by the Chaldeans, comprised the princes, the nobles, the priests, the warriors, the skilled artisans, leaving nothing but the unskilled laborers, "the poor of the land, to be husbandmen and vine-dressers."

In the lands to which they were taken, they were not slaves or captives, but free colonists—free to follow their several pursuits, and to enrich themselves by their exertions, but not free to quit the region to which they had been transferred, nor free, perhaps—but judging in this from analogy, rather than known fact—from paying a tax to the government higher than that required from the native population; though we may conclude that any distinction to their disadvantage in this respect, ceased with the lapse of time. Of all people that ever lived, the Jews were a people adapted to thrive under such circumstances. If they have thriven in modern times, in all the countries of their dispersion, in spite of the dislike and abhorrence with which they have been regarded by those among whom they dwelt—in spite of the persecutions to which they have been subjected—and in spite of the most cruel and impoverishing exactions,—how much more must they have thriven among a people who had no strong hatred against them, and under a govern-

ment which had a due sense of their value as useful citizens and servants of the state, and which, therefore, sought rather to encourage than to depress them. No doubt there were exceptions. We know historically of some. But that, upon the whole, the Jews did not eventually find themselves in an evil case, is shown by the fact of their general backwardness to return to their own land, when the decree of Cyrus left them free to do so; and by the acknowledged fact, that, as it was the flower of the nation which had been taken into exile, so it was the flower of the nation which chose to remain in the land to which it had been exiled.

But although the exiled Hebrews eventually found their lot to be attended with many ameliorations, some time passed before these could be realized; and they were only fully realized by the generation composed of those born in exile, or too young at the time of deportation to cherish any disturbing recollections of what they had lost. In all cases, exile is a bitter thing, and bitterest of all when it is known to be a life exile, from which there is no hope of return. Only those who have spent years in distant lands can tell the yearning of the heart for one's native land—the craving, increasing in intensity as time passes, to return to its fair shores—to live there a few more years before life closes, and at last to die in our own nest.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

Distance of either time or place lends this enchantment to the view which the mind takes of the far-off or long-forsaken home; and not less to the returned exile than to the man long sick, when he "breathes and walks again,"—

"The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise."

But the feeling is more enduring; for if one is at length privileged to return to his own land, he finds that land has acquired an interest in his eyes which age cannot wither nor use exhaust. This is not speculation, but experience. For the writer can

declare, that after some years of absence in the far-off lands of the morning, with little thought or intention of ever returning, and after the first agonizing rapture of greeting once more his natal soil had subsided, he has not ceased, during nineteen years, to feel it as a joy and a privilege, which has, in its measure, been a balm to many sorrows, to dwell in this land; and he has experienced a constant intensity of enjoyment in the mere fact of existence in it, which had not formerly been imagined, and which only the facts of privation and comparison can enable one thoroughly to realize.

Now, if this be merely the common feeling of all men towards their father-land,* in what intensity must not this feeling have existed among the Jews, to whom their native country possessed not only the common interest which every land offers to the native thereof, but to whom the land from which they were cast forth was the land of the promise made to their fathers—the land consecrated by the special presence of Jehovah—the land, the possession of which was so interwoven with their laws and religion, that without it they could not discharge the obligations of the covenant, and their very worship must become a service shorn of its essential rites. To be cast forth from that land, was avowedly a mark of their Lord's displeasure; and the burden of this consciousness, heavy upon their souls, imparts a peculiar horror to the denunciations of the prophets, and an agony, not known before or since among men, to the lamentations of the people. In the same proportion, the certainty that few of even the youngest then living could ever hope to return, must have been felt with an intensity of anguish, to which, in the more refined minds,

> "The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
> Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,"

* This term has now been naturalized from the Germans; but if our own good old "mother country" had not been spoiled by its use in petty colonial politics, it would have been far more significant and expressive. As it is, no one can use the term with comfort, after the newspapers have defiled it, by appropriating to the permanent Under-Secretary for the Colonies the title of "Mr. Mother Country."

had been but light torture; and on this, the tenderest point of all, Jeremiah spared them not:—"Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

TWENTIETH WEEK—FRIDAY.

CAPTIVES.—JEREMIAH XXII. 26, 27.

We yesterday contemplated the state of exile which the prophet predicted and recorded in its final aspects,—showing that when the captives reached their allotted abodes, their condition was less austere than has usually been supposed, unless from the feelings which must necessarily connect themselves with an expatriated condition, even under the most favorable circumstances.

But, it may be asked, how then are we to understand the deplorable pictures drawn by the prophets; and how to take the historical records and the sculptured memorials of the most cruel treatment of prisoners of war? We may even be referred back to our own recent observations on those barbarities.

The answer is easy. These atrocities are inflicted upon the chiefs and leaders, or those whose conduct has been peculiarly offensive to the conquerors, immediately after the capture, or immediately on their being brought to the presence of the king, should he have been absent at the time, as was Nebuchadnezzar when Zedekiah was seized in the attempt to escape. This treatment did not affect the mass of the people destined for exile: but there can be no doubt that these also suffered much petty maltreatment from the brutal troopers before they commenced their journey, especially if they belonged to a town that had been taken by fire and sword; and we may well believe, that under the escort of such soldiers, the long journey to their appointed land must have been replete with hardship and suffering, especially as whole families were taken away,

with the women and children, to whom such a journey would have been severely trying under the most favorable circumstances, and who had now to make it under the rude conduct of hostile bands, careless of their ease, indifferent to their suffering, and with blood yet warm from recent conflict. These could have no other care than to get the train of exiles along as speedily as they could, and with as little loss of life as circumstances might permit. In all such cases of enforced expatriation, whether to slavery or to comparative freedom, and whether by land or sea, the horrors of "the middle passage" are great, and never to be forgotten.

The Assyrian sculptures throw much and interesting light upon the whole subject—the more valuable, as the first series of expatriations recorded in Scripture were by this very people; and because, although the latter series were by the Babylonians, these were founded on the same principles, and doubtless conducted in the same manner.

The information derivable from this source, as to the results of a city being taken by assault, with the subsequent treatment of the prisoners, as well as of the milder treatment of expatriated populations not thus taken in conflict, tallies in all respects with the accounts in Scripture. The statement in which Layard embodies this information, is that which we shall chiefly follow, because he is not open to any suspicion of straining his interpretation of the sculptures to make them illustrative of Scripture. This is scarcely even incidentally his object; and even in the page or two for which we take his guidance, several illustrations of Scripture occur, of which he appears to be unconscious, but which it will be our duty to indicate.

In the Assyrian sculptures, it is seen that when the battering-ram has effected a breach, and the assault has commenced, the women appear on the walls, and tearing their hair, or stretching forth their arms, implore for mercy. The men are not unfrequently represented as joining in this cry for quarter. But when the assailants became masters of the place, an indiscriminate slaughter appears to have succeeded, and the city was generally given over to the flames. In the bas-reliefs, warriors

are seen decapitating the conquered, and plunging swords or daggers into their hearts, holding them by the hair of their heads. Layard says, "The prisoners were either impaled and subjected to horrible torments, or carried away as slaves." From this we differ; as, where the men are represented as impaled, the siege is perceived to be still in progress—showing that the persons thus treated were not taken in the city, but such as fell into the assailant's hands in the course of the siege, and with whom they thus dealt in order to terrify the besieged. The tortures we take to be exceptional instances of exemplary punishment; and it is certainly likely, that the men whom the warriors chose to spare in the sack of a city became their slaves, whom they might sell for their profit. The case of persons so taken is all along to be carefully distinguished from that of expatriated inhabitants. As to the prisoners being so disposed of as slaves, we have Joel's testimony to the fact: "They have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink."* The particulars of what takes place when the enemy enters the city, call strongly to mind the statements of Jeremiah: "The Chaldeans burnt the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem." "The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets; my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword."† And still more forcibly illustrate the historical statement: "The king of the Chaldees slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age."‡

We have not seen any representations of the migrations of large bodies of the conquered people—men, women, and children—because this is not properly an incident of warlike action, but a subsequent and deliberate measure. What we do see mostly is the evacuation of cities by the women and children, who are, of course, the chief or sole survivors—the men having been slaughtered; together with the removal of the spoil, indicated chiefly by flocks and herds. "Eunuchs and scribes were

* Joel iii. 3. † Jer. xxxix. 8. Lam. ii. 21. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17

appointed to take an inventory of the spoil. They appear to have stood near the gate, and wrote down with a pen, probably upon rolls of leather, the number of prisoners, sheep and oxen, and the amount of booty, which issued from the city. The women were sometimes taken away in bullock carts; and are usually seen in the bas-reliefs having a part of their property with them, either in a vase or sack, perhaps filled with household stuff. They were sometimes accompanied by their children; and they are generally represented as tearing their hair, throwing dust upon their head, and bewailing their lot."* The lot in such cases may have been slavery—the usual doom of those taken in a captured town; or it may be that they are being conveyed to the rendezvous or starting-point of the larger migration. Sometimes there are men as well as women captives. In that case, the men have almost always their hands bound behind or before them, and sometimes their feet are also fettered. They are roughly handled by the troopers, being urged along by blows from staves and the butt-ends of spears, as well as by "punches in the head." In one case, a prisoner turns back as if to remonstrate with the soldier whose hand is uplifted against him. One fact tells favorably: this is, that the female captives are never bound, nor personally maltreated; and that they are always well laden with baskets and bundles, containing, no doubt, portions of their property, that they were allowed to take with them.

These scenes painfully illustrate the whole of this part of the subject, and call to mind the Lord's denunciation by the prophet against the reigning king, Coniah (Jeconiah): "I will cast thee out, *and thy mother that bare thee*, into another country, where ye were not born, and there shall ye die."

After the city had been taken, a throne for the king appears to have been placed in some conspicuous spot within the walls. He is represented in the sculptures as sitting upon it, attended by his eunuchs and principal officers, and receiving the prisoners brought bound to his presence. The chiefs prostrate themselves before him, while he places his foot upon their necks.

* Layard, ii. 372.

This reminds one of Joshua's commanding the captains of Israel to put their feet upon the necks of the captive kings;* and of such expressions as—"Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me."† This was, in fact, a symbolical action of completed triumph and mastery, on the one part, and of as complete subjugation and humiliation, on the other; and as such it is represented, not only in the Assyrian, but in Egyptian and Persian sculptures. It has escaped the describers of Nineveh antiquities, that this setting of the conquering king's throne in the conquered city is pointed out with marked emphasis by Jeremiah: "Lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem."‡ And so, when at Tahpanhes in Egypt, the prophet foreshows the future and not remote conquest of that country by the Babylonians in a very remarkable manner, he hides some great stones "in the clay of the brick-kiln that is at the entry of Pharaoh's house;" and, in doing so, declares, in the name of the Lord, to the men of Judah there present, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, should come, and "set his throne upon these stones that I have hid, and spread his royal pavilion over them."§

TWENTIETH WEEK—SATURDAY.

THE YOKES.—JEREMIAH XXVII. XXVIII.

JEREMIAH is remarkable among the prophets for the extent in which he was taught, and in which he was instructed to teach, by material symbols. Of the many instances of this which will occur to the reader's recollection, we may notice one which is connected with some characteristic incidents of the time. It will be borne in mind that the policy constantly enforced by Jeremiah was that of quiet submission to the Baby-

* Jos. x. 24.
† Psalm xviii. 40; 2 Sam. xxii. 41.
‡ Jer. i. 15.
§ Jer. xliii. 9, 10.

lonians, as the only means by which the nation could enjoy peace under its own kings, and by which the land, the city, and the temple, could be preserved from the ruin which would be drawn down, by any attempt to shake off the yoke of that powerful and haughty people.

To enforce this doctrine of public policy, the prophet was instructed to make certain yokes, and send them to the neighboring princes of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, by the ambassadors whom they had sent to Jerusalem to confer with king Zedekiah, doubtless with a view to some confederate action against the Chaldean power—enjoining them to wear the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, into whose hand all these lands had been given. What reception this extraordinary message met with from these foreign kings we know not. It had perhaps more effect than we may suppose; for it does not appear that these powers saw fit in the end to lend any aid to the Jews in their revolt, and we know that some aided the Chaldeans against them, and exulted in their destruction.

We do know, however, what reception this significant message met with at home, and what became of the yoke which the prophet was instructed *to wear upon his own neck*, while he enforced the like counsel upon his own king and people. To our notions, this was a strange spectacle, and a singular mode of preaching to kings and courts. We are, in fact, not very well able to appreciate the force and emphasis which this typical representation gave to the utterances of the prophets, to a people who were used to be taught by such signs, and to whose genius they appear to have been peculiarly suited. "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die—thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?" This was the purport of the message which he thus delivered before king Zedekiah and his court, and of which, when once delivered, his continuing to wear the yoke in public, as he did, was a standing memorial, continually reminding those who saw it of the declara-

tion which it symbolized and embodied. He even appeared with it in the temple, to the inner courts of which he, as a priest, had access. He was thus one day in the temple, when he was accosted by Hananiah the son of Azur, of Gibeon, who, in the presence of the priests and the people, dared to deliver a counter-prophecy in the name of the Lord, declaring that the yoke of the king of Babylon was broken, and that within two years all the spoils of the temple should be brought back, and that the captive king, Jeconiah, and all the other captives, should return. "Amen; the Lord do so," responded Jeremiah; but he warned him that there were signs and fulfilments, by which the people would soon learn whether such prophets of peace as he, were sent from God or not.

But Hananiah persisted, and snatching the yoke from Jeremiah's neck, broke it, and by a curious appropriation and transfer of the symbol, cried: "Thus saith the Lord, Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years."

And what said—what did, Jeremiah, at this high-handed blasphemy and outrage? He did nothing, said nothing—"And Jeremiah the prophet went his way," is all that the record states. This is rare conduct—singular self-control; but it is strikingly indicative of the character of the man. He saw that the case had gone out of his hands—had attained a point to which his commission did not reach; and it therefore behooved him to restrain the natural expression of his indignation, and await in patience the Lord's decision in his own cause.

He had not long to wait. This word of the Lord soon came: "Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast broken the yokes of wood, but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the King of Israel, I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; AND THEY SHALL SERVE HIM."

Besides this there was a word of doom for Hananiah himself. He had imposed upon the Lord the necessity of vindi-

cating his insulted message, and to avouch the truth of his messenger; and it had become needful to show that, while in any case it was no light matter to prophesy a lie in the name of the Lord, the offence became doubly atrocious when the lie was framed for the very purpose of nullifying a true message, and of discrediting a true messenger. Therefore, the prophet, after a brief and solemn pause, again bespoke the attention of Hananiah and the people; and his voice became awful with the tones of judgment, as he said: "Hear now, Hananiah. The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Behold I will cast thee from off the face of the earth. THIS YEAR SHALT THOU DIE, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord." And what was the result? Nothing more nor less than this is said: "So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month." This simple record of the result has always seemed to us unequalled in that simplicity which rises to grandeur. Here is no carefulness of minute statement as to exact fulfilment; no call to admiration at the effect of the Lord's judgment. "*So* Hananiah died;" that is all. There is a world of meaning in that "So,"—indicating that it was simply the most natural and inevitable thing in the world that Hananiah should die,—nothing at all to marvel at that he did die—when his doom had been thus denounced.

But further, take notice of the date of Hananiah's death. It was important for the object in view that it should not be long delayed. Nor was it. The cursory reader may think that he was to die within twelve months, which seems too large a latitude in a case of signal judgment like this. But it is not so. It is said that he should die before the expiry of the then current year, in the fifth month of which the prophecy was delivered; and, in fact, he died in the seventh month which was only two months after the doom was denounced and while, therefore, that denunciation was fresh in the recollection of the people.

This transaction doubtless tended much for a time to secure greater attention and respect for the prophet's utterances.

Twenty-First Week—Sunday.

CONSIDERATION.—JEREMIAH XXX. 24.

After denouncing the Lord's judgments upon a people laden with iniquity, and looking beyond to a time of restoration and peace, Jeremiah rebukes their present carelessness and indifference, by assuring them that in that better time to come, they will look back with very different feelings upon their present conduct as a nation: "In the latter days ye shall consider it." This is a passage which calls to mind the striking and very parallel text in Deut. xxxii. 29: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

This last passage is usually interpreted as if "the latter end" were synonymous with death. This we apprehend is not exactly the case, except in so far as that death is "the latter end" of all that belongs to man's life and conduct in this world. The latter end appears rather, in the primary signification, intended to refer to the closing period of a course of action or conduct, when it can all be looked back upon, and when the effects are seen and the results experienced. The great practical point is to urge upon us the necessity of closely examining our own heart and life, with especial reference to the light in which it will appear even to ourselves hereafter—when we have already reaped all that we have sown, or have come to reap it—and, above all, when we come to cast one long look behind, as our feet totter on the borders of the grave.

To many it may seem difficult thus, by due consideration, to realize at one time of life, or at one station in a course of action, the point of view which seems to belong to another. But it is not so. It is, in fact, easy to those who wish for it and strive after it. It is simply the *true* point of view; and it were hard for us if the Lord had not provided for our guidance into all truth, not only of essential doctrine, but of life and conduct, at every period of our course, and under all

circumstances that can possibly arise. We have, in the Scriptures, a sure and certain light unto our path; and he who has been careful to store his mind with its holy teachings will never be at a loss in deciding upon his own conduct, or upon any course of action he contemplates. Our Lord himself said of those that would not "receive" his words though they heard them: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day." And this is true also of all the words spoken in Scripture. If a man has heard these words—whether at the time he heeds them or not—whether he receives them or not—they fail not to judge him in his own consciousness, not only at the last day, but in his latter days—those great days of decision. That such a standard of conquering and invincible truth should be erected in the mind, constraining man to become his own judge, and enabling him to decide promptly between the accusings and excusings of his conscience, is a matter of vital moment, and evinces the importance of filling with the knowledge of Scripture even those minds which may not, at the time, entertain any adequate impression of its saving truths.

If this were not enough, the mind earnestly desirous of realizing these most true latter end views of things, may obtain them through the most gentle teachings of the Divine Spirit which were never yet denied to any who sought them in singleness of heart.

With these essential and sure guides to the consideration urged upon us by the sacred writers, we are without excuse if we neglect the duty, and brutal if we despise the privilege.

Ah, who is there among us, who, in looking back upon the past, cannot now discern grievous stains, fearful short-comings, distressing faithlessness, evil, if not the appearance of evil, dishonoring to Christ, and defiling to our own souls, burdensome to our consciences, in the fairest and sunniest periods of our lives, when these things were but lightly heeded; and how are we then compelled to exclaim—'Oh that I had considered—that I had given one thought to God and the latter end, before I took this burden on my soul!"

The longer this habit of consideration is postponed, the more burdensome it becomes. There is much in a heart-searching retrospect over the earliest and most innocent period of life to awaken compunction and regret; but if the wholesome check which the habit of considering the latter end imposes, be not formed in good time, the blackening horror of the later and more advanced period makes that early time seem bright in the comparison, and gives birth to feelings which have found expression in such words as these:—

"Lost days of youth! Oh holy days,
When joy was blest with prayer and praise—
When this sad heart, now deeply dyed
With many a thought unsanctified,
Trembled at every venial stain,
And shrunk from sin as now from pain!
Oh, not that even in that hour
Of early reason's dawning power,
My soul was pure from thoughts of sin;
But now so dark the past has been,
That those first stains of young offence
Bear the light hue of innocence."*

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—MONDAY.

THE RECHABITES.—JEREMIAH XXXV.

THERE was a remarkable people whose presence in Jerusalem, to which they had repaired for refuge on the approach of the Chaldean army, in the time of king Jehoiakim, afforded to the prophet Jeremiah an occasion, of which he was directed to avail himself, of administering a significant rebuke to the Israelites.

These were the Rechabites, of whom we seem to learn from 1 Chron. ii. 55, that they were identical with or a branch of the Kenites, who were of the family of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and came with the Israelites into Palestine and

* *The Christian Physiologist.* London, 1830.

there continued to lead their former mode of life, as in the instance of Heber the Kenite. Judges iv. 11. When, therefore, we are told that Jonadab, the son (descendant) of Rechab, and who is generally conceived to be the person of the same name and designation who lived in the time of Jehu, and whose apparent sanction to his proceedings, that commissioned exterminator deemed important—when we are told that this person imposed upon this family the obligation never to build houses, but always to dwell in tents; and never to sow corn, or cultivate vineyards, or to drink wine, he did not impose upon them any new law of life, but bound them to the conservation of their then existing and ancient usages. All these, in fact, except the last, are such as belong to this form of life; and the last also now belongs to it among all the tribes of like habit in Western Asia, wine being forbidden to them as to other Moslems. Why Jonadab should have added this to the proper peculiarities of their condition, may be supposed to be that they might not be tempted to plant vineyards in order to obtain wine, and thereby become fixed to particular localities, and insensibly sink into (or rise into) cultivators of the soil. By prohibiting the two principal branches of culture, this was rendered impossible so long as his injunction should be observed. It is possible that the Kenites had, in his time, evinced some disposition to exchange their mode of life for the settled, and, as it may have seemed to them, the more comfortable, one of the Hebrews among whom they sojourned, and that Jonadab was averse to this alteration, and took measures to prevent it in the Rechabite branch of the family. There is no reason to suppose that in this he had any religious or ascetic motives, but merely the prudential one which he assigns:—"That ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers." This has been variously understood. We take it to mean, that seeing the land was divided among the tribes and families of Israel, any attempt on their part to become proprietors and cultivators of land, would speedily bring them into collision with the Israelites, and end in their expulsion from the country. In the unquestioned use of the commons and

open pastures, they derived great advantage in their existing condition of life.

To this people Jeremiah was instructed to offer wine. It is observable that he said only, "Drink ye wine:" not the customary formula, which would have given it the shape of "Thus saith the Lord, Drink ye wine"—for it is probable, indeed it is all but certain, that they would then have obeyed; the obligation of obedience to a command thus enforced, being far greater than that of obedience to the injunction of their ancestor. As it was, they felt themselves at liberty respectfully to decline this invitation. They said, "We do not drink wine;" and proceeded to give the interesting recital of their forefather's injunction, which they affirmed had always been strictly obeyed during the three hundred years which had elapsed since it was delivered.

Upon this Jeremiah proceeded, with great force, to contrast this regard of the Rechabites to the simple injunction of their long since deceased ancestor, with the Israelites' habitual neglect of the Lord's warnings and commands, though pressed upon them with constant urgency by his servants the prophets.

Then, he commended the Rechabites for their faithfulness, saying, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you: Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me forever."

This promise has attracted great attention, reasonably suggesting that the Rechabites are still in existence, and may yet be found. We abstain from repeating the attempts that have been made to trace them historically in the later history of the Jews. It may suffice to state, that some suppose that they went into captivity with the Jews and returned with them. This we doubt. Pastoral tribes do not go into captivity, as it is always open to them to flee into the deserts, where they cannot be followed, and where they only can subsist. Besides, the Chaldeans only took captives of the sort of people they

wanted—and they were not likely to want nomade tribes, which were but too abundant in their territories and upon their borders already. We therefore agree with those who think it more probable that they withdrew into Arabia; and if they did that, it is not very likely that they would return into Palestine after the captivity.

The question is, therefore, if any trace of them can be found among the Arabian tribes. It must confessedly be difficult to distinguish them now, because the only distinctive feature of their external condition, that of abstinence from wine, is now common to all the Arab tribes. It might, however, be possible that we should find a tribe of Bedouin habits of life, observing certain Jewish usages, and acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. But we should have no ground on which to conclude that these were Rechabites—they might be a tribe of Bedouin Jews. Such we know there were in and before the time of Mohammed, and such there may be now. Assuming that the ancient Rechabites were proselytes to the Jewish religion, as seems to be evinced by the fact, that Jeremiah took them into the temple, we could only identify them by finding that they added to Bedouin habits and Jewish knowledge, a claim to this origin, and that although Jews in religion, they abstained from wine. Only on these two narrow grounds would it be possible to distinguish them from Bedouin Jews on the one hand, and from Bedouin Arabs on the other. The information which requires to be tested by these rules must engage our attention to-morrow.

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—TUESDAY.

MODERN RECHABITES.—JEREMIAH XXXV.

In the twelfth century a learned Jewish Rabbi of Tudela, in Spain, hence known as Benjamin of Tudela, undertook an extensive journey with the view of visiting the various Jewish communities dispersed through the East, and of ascertaining

their numbers and condition. On his return he published the results in Hebrew, in the shape of an itinerary. This performance is in parts obscure from its extreme conciseness, and it is not free from the exaggerations and wild reports which mark the writings of that age. This, for a time, threw discredit on the whole performance; but latterly, the statements of Rabbi Benjamin have been, by our better information, substantiated in so many particulars, that, as in the case of many old travellers from Herodotus downward, his credit has been in a great degree restored, and he is regarded as certainly intending to be truthful, and as actually truthful in what he reports of his own knowledge, though he exercised little critical judgment in sifting the reports of others.

This work has been translated into many languages. The best and latest in our own is, curiously enough, by the learned German-Jewish bookseller, Mr. Asher of Berlin.* From this we copy the following with regard to the Rechabites. Arrived at Pombeditha on the Euphrates, where he found three thousand Jews with their synagogues, sepulchres, and colleges, he reports seemingly what he heard there of the Jews far to the south in Arabia. He says: "Twenty-one days' journey through the desert of Sheba or Al-Yemen, from which Mesopotamia lies in a northerly direction, are the abodes of the Jews who are called B'ne (children of) Rekhab, men of Thema.† The seat of their government is Thema, or Tehama, where their prince and governor, Rabbi Chanon, resides. The city is large, and the extent of their country is sixteen days' journey towards the northern mountain range. They possess large and strong cities, and are not subject to any of the Gentiles, but undertake warlike expeditions into distant provinces with the Arabians their neighbors and allies, 'to take the spoil and to take the prey.' The Arabians are Bedouins, who live in tents in the deserts,

* Published in London, but obviously from the cut of the type printed in Germany. It is in two volumes,—the first comprising the Hebrew text and translation, with bibliography; the second, a large body of learned and curious notes, etc.

† Asher identifies this with the Thema of Isa. xxi. 14; Jer. xxv. 23.

and have no fixed abode, and who are in the habit of undertaking marauding expeditions in the province of Yemen. The Jews are a terror to their neighbors; their country being very extensive, some of them cultivate the land, and some cattle. A number of learned and studious men, who spend their lives in the study of the law, are maintained by the tithes of all produce, part of which is employed towards maintaining the poor, and ascetics called Mourners of Tsion, and Mourners of Jerushalaim. These eat no meat, dress always in black, and live in caves or in low houses, and keep fasts all their lives except on Sabbaths and holy days. They continually implore the mercy of God for the Jews in exile, and devoutly pray that He may have compassion upon them for the sake of his own great name."

But that he calls them "sons of Rekhab" (Rechab), it would be difficult to recognize anything of the Rechabites in all this. They neither dwell in tents, nor abstain from the culture of the ground, nor from wine; for those who do so abstain are described as ascetics,—and that they abstain, shows that the general body did not. Besides, they abstain from flesh also, which was not forbidden to the Rechabites, and which was indeed their proper food as a pastoral people. Moreover, that these ascetics, though habitual abstinents, did not fast on the Sabbaths and holy days, prove them to be (as Niebuhr conjectured) Talmudical Jews, fasting on these days being forbidden in the Talmud. Upon the whole, therefore, and supposing the story true, or partly true, we cannot recognize in this people the marks which should distinguish them from the Arabs, on the one hand, or from the Jews on the other. We should be more assured in recognizing these signs. But, on the other hand, Jeremiah does not foretell that the Rechabites should always retain the habits of life imposed by Jonadab, but only that their race should never become extinct. We do not know that change would be imputed as an offence to them, as, with the captivity, and with their removal from Canaan, *the cause* for these restrictions ceased; and that the Rechabites did not regard the command of their father as overruling in all cases (as

a command from God would) the exercise of their own judgment from the necessity of circumstances, is clear; for, notwithstanding the command to dwell in tents, they went and lived in Jerusalem in a time of danger. The strongest circumstance is, that the people claimed to be sons of Rechab. People do not, without some ground, claim an inferior rank,—and a Jewish people would count it a far greater honor to be descended from one of the twelve tribes than from Jonadab the son of Rechab. Even the fact of their being Talmudical Jews would not affect their claim in this respect. Their peculiarities were not religious, but social; and if they had become Jews, as we doubt not they had, they were subject, as much as the other Jews in Arabia, to the influences of Talmudical teaching.

We catch further glimpses of this people from travellers, who, however, seemed to know them only as Jews. Varthema, in the fifteenth century, speaks of Arabian Jews, potent and cruel, secured more by deserts and hills than by any greatness of their own. Niebuhr is as usual more explicit and exact than any preceding traveller. He tells that the highlands of the Hedjaz are possessed by a number of independent sovereign sheikhs, of whom little was known, except that they lived in houses and villages during part of the year, and (at least some of them) in tents during another part. The most remarkable, *and least known* of these highland communities, was one which had been formed by Jews in the mountains lying north-east of Medina. This tract of country is called Kheibar, and the Jews belonging to it are called by the Arabs Beni Kheibar. They had independent sheikhs of their own, and were divided into three tribes. They were so odious to the Mohammedans for their predatory attacks upon the caravans, that *in* Syria, the greatest affront that could be offered to a man was to call him Beni Kheibar. It did not appear that these Jews kept up any intercourse with their brethren dispersed over Asia. "When I asked the Jews in Syria concerning them," says Niebuhr, "they told me that those false brethren durst not claim their fellowship, for *that they did not observe the law*." This is certainly in favor of

their claim to be Rechabites, and might go to suggest that they did *not* follow the law according to its Talmudical interpretations. Niebuhr finds evidence that "this branch of the Jews must have subsisted for *more* than twelve (now thirteen) centuries." Beyond that the trace is lost.

More recently Dr. Wolff, the Jewish missionary, heard much of these people. "The Jews not only of Jerusalem, but likewise those of Yemen, told me that the Rechabites, mentioned in Jeremiah xxxv., were still existing around Mecca. The Mussulmans who performed their pilgrimage to Mecca confirmed that account; the latter knew them by the name of Khaibaree." This identifies them with those of whom Niebuhr speaks. At "Jalooha," in Mesopotamia, one was pointed out to him as belonging to this people. "I saw one before me standing, dressed and wild like an Arab, the bridle of his horse holding in his hand, I showed him the Bible in Hebrew and Arabic; he read both languages, and was rejoiced to see the Bible; he was not acquainted with the New Testament. After having proclaimed to him the tidings of salvation, and made him a present of the Hebrew and Arabic Bibles and Testaments, I asked him, Whose descendant are you?

"*Mousa*—(This was his name), with a loud voice—Come, I show to you; and then he began to read Jeremiah xxxv., from verse 5 to 11.

"*Wolff*—Where do you reside?

"*Mousa*—(Recurring to Genesis x. 27.)—At Hadoram, now called Samar by the Arabs, at Usal, now called Sanaa by the Arabs, and (Genesis x. 30) at Mesha, now called Mecca, in the deserts around those places. We drink no wine, and plant no vineyard, and sow no seed, and live in tents, as Jonadab our father commanded us. Hobab was our father too. Come to us; you will still find 60,000 in number; and you see thus the prophecy has been fulfilled. Therefore thus saith the Lord, 'Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before Me forever.' And saying this, Mousa the Rechabite mounted his horse, and fled away and left behind him a host of evidence of sacred writ."

Previously, in the very quarter where Rabbi Benjamin got his information, Wolff writes in his journal: "All the Jews of this country believe that the Beni Khaibr, near Mecca and Medinah, are the descendants of the ancient Rechabites."

Subsequently he met, at Ispahan, in Persia, with a Jew from Yemen; and when Wolff asked him, "Do you know the Jews, Khaibr?" he replied, "You mean the children of Rechab? They are mighty men, and have not felt the yoke of captivity" (and then he joyfully lifted up his fingers, and moved them about), and said, "They are the descendants of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, who said," etc. "And thus they do—the children of Ishmael curse them, and we bless them."

Lately some further information respecting this interesting people, has been furnished by Rabbi Joseph Schwartz, in his *Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine*, published at Philadelphia in 1850. After showing that the Rechabites were descendants of Heber the Kenite, and more remotely, from Jethro; and producing evidence from the Rabbinical writings, that they eventually settled in Yemen,—a long statement ensues, of which the following is an abstract:—

"There are many traces of them at present; they live entirely isolated, will not be recognized, and shun, or rather hate, all intercourse, and every connection with the other Jews. They only sojourn in Arabia, and for the most part on the western shores of the Red Sea, and are engaged solely in the raising of cattle. In the vicinity of Junbua, a sea-port on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, they are found at times laboring as smiths, and have commercial connections with other Arabic tribes, (that is) they barter with them. They are called Arab Sebh (*i. e.* Arabs who keep the seventh day), are generally esteemed and feared; so that they form, so to say, a gigantic people, whose power and greatness excite fear. They only speak Hebrew and Arabic, and will form no connection or acquaintance with the Jews; and should they be recognized as Jews, or if one should enter into conversation with them on the subject, they will quickly deny their origin, and assert that they are but of common Arabic descent

They will not touch another Arab, much less will they eat anything with him, even those things which are permitted to Jews, and they always stay at some distance from the other Arabs, should their barter trade at times bring them together, so as not to come into any mediate or immediate contact. They always appear on horseback, and armed; and people assert that they have noticed the fringes, commanded in Scripture, on their covering and clothes. They are occasionally seen in Palestine, but very seldom, and then, as it were, in secrecy and unrecognized. Some even say that several have been met within Jerusalem, but never make themselves known, although the reason of this singular silence, and the anxious desire to escape detection, has remained hitherto a profound secret. At the same time, it is clearly ascertained that they are Jews in every sense of the word,—live according to the Jewish laws, and also possess some knowledge of the learned rabbis who flourished in the early ages of the Christian era."

An anecdote, in proof of this last point, is given; and the fact shows that they must have been at some time subject to Rabbinical teaching.

The result of the whole seems to be, that this people is known to the Arabs only as Jews,—whence also the reports of travellers who derived their accounts from Arabian information. But those who derive their information from Jewish sources recognize them as Rechabites, which they claim to be themselves, and are unwilling to be taken for Jews in their own country, resting more upon the rights of their Arabian descent than upon the degree in which they have adopted the Jewish religion—while proud of the testimony which the monuments of that religion bear to their history and their faithfulness.

From these particulars, which we have been at some pains to bring together, it is not difficult to perceive the real position of this people; and we see that the greater exactness of modern inquiry has strengthened the probability contained in the Rabbi Benjamin's first information concerning them, that in this people we find the ancient Rechabites. Still, the evidence must

be taken for what it is worth; and it must be borne in mind, that the fact that the Rechabites maintain at this day a descent recognizable by others, or even by themselves, is by no means necessary to the corroboration of Jeremiah's prophecy. Although the family should not be at this day known, our ignorance is no evidence that it does not exist. A genealogical series may perish from the knowledge of men, but not from the nature of things, and from the knowledge of God. Though the seeds of wheat, barley, and other things may be mixed together, so that men cannot distinguish them, yet their distinction has not perished; and God not only knows it, but also discovers it, when He makes every seed to rise in its own body.

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

HIDDEN STORES IN THE FIELDS.—JEREMIAH XLI. 8.

THERE is a very remarkable incident in the account of the proceedings of Ishmael, who, after the Babylonians, had withdrawn their forces, came up with a band of men from the land of Ammon, in which he had been sojourning, and treacherously slew the unsuspecting Gedaliah whom the Chaldeans had left governor of the remnant left in the land, and who, although warned, could not be brought to believe that Ishmael had any evil intentions against him. This too generous confidence was repaid by his destruction, with that of his adherents present at Mizpah (which had been made the seat of his government), as well as of the small band of Chaldean soldiers which had been left with him for his protection. The exact object of this atrocity does not appear—but as Ishmael was of the "seed royal," it is probable that he was disgusted to see a person not of the royal line, governor of the impoverished land; and, moreover, regarded Gedaliah with hatred as one who had stooped to hold office under the destroyers of his country.

The deed being done, Ishmael, aware of what might be expected when it transpired, from the vengeance of the Chaldeans

on the one hand, and from that of the people of Samaria, who had long been in quiet subjection to the Chaldeans, on the other, was anxious to keep it close, until he should have completed his arrangements for returning with his spoil and captives into the land of the Ammonites. He was, therefore, under some alarm at hearing, only the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, that a body of four score persons from Shechem, from Shiloh, and Samaria, were advancing towards the place, which lay on the road to Jerusalem, "having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves with offerings and incense in their hand to bring them to the house of the Lord." Whether these were Samaritans, properly so called, that is, those colonists whom the Assyrians had formerly brought in to supply in part the place of the exiled Israelites, or were of the remnant of native Israelites whom the conquerors had left in the land, has been questioned. We shall not raise the inquiry—but the only plausible objection against their being of the former class has no real weight. It is urged that they would not worship at Jerusalem. But this was only the case in a later age, when the Jews had refused to allow them any interest in the restored temple, and after they had been induced in consequence to set up a temple of their own upon Mount Gerizim. Until then, they were always anxious to take part in the temple services, and to claim an interest in them; and the antagonism into which they were eventually thrown in this respect, was the work of the Jews themselves, who, rightly or wrongly, we say not, sternly refused to acknowledge that they had any part or lot in the matter.

But be this as it may, what was that "house of the Lord" to which they were proceeding with their oblations? seeing that the temple of Jerusalem was already destroyed by fire. Some think that Gedaliah had built an altar at Mizpah—which was one of the old covenanted places of assembly to the people—and had organized some kind of worship there. Some object to this that an altar is not called "the house of the Lord."* But on this we lay little stress, remembering that

* BLAYNEY'S *Jeremiah*, on this text.

Jacob declared that the stone which he had set up at Luz should be "God's house," which, indeed, that place was afterwards called (Bethel), when he had at a later period made an altar and offered worship there. Nevertheless, seeing that Gedaliah was a well-instructed man, and that the prophet Jeremiah, who was present at Mizpah, and was himself a priest, would have been likely to have mentioned this fact had it occurred, and would undoubtedly have used his influence to prevent its occurrence, as a dangerous irregularity, had it been attempted, we are disinclined to accept this interpretation; and seeing that these persons evidently appear as mourners for the desolation of the temple, we conceive that they were proceeding to Jerusalem, where, probably, those priests who had not been carried away by the Chaldeans had, with the permission of the governor, set up an altar among the ruins, at which the offerings of any remaining worshippers might be presented. This is rendered the more likely by the fact, that when the Jews returned from captivity, the first thing they did was to set up an altar on the site of the old one, and celebrate the ordinary sacrificial worship thereon.

As his bloody deed was not yet known beyond the walls of Mizpah, and dreading lest these men should come to the knowledge of it, and rouse the country against him, before he had wholly completed his purpose, Ishmael resolved to cut them off. To this end it was needful to get them into the town, as such a slaughter in the open country would speedily be known. So he went out to intercept them, weeping as he went, as if under equal concern with them for the ruin of the land and the destruction of the temple. After some discourse, he invited them into the town to see Gedaliah, speaking of him as one still alive, and whom he held in high respect. This was doubtless either to ascertain whether they had heard of his murder: or else as suggesting that the governor would gladly receive and liberally entertain them. The pilgrims, unsuspicious of guile, readily accompanied him; but no sooner had he got them into the midst of the city than he fell upon them and slew them, casting their bodies into a great pit which already

held the corpses of the men slain with Gedaliah. Of this pit the curious fact, not elsewhere mentioned, is recorded, that it was the same pit which had been made by king Asa, "for fear of Baasha king of Israel." We know that Asa fortified Mizpah—1 Kings xv. 22—as a frontier stronghold against the northern kingdom, and it is reasonable to suppose, that as this pit appears to have been in the heart of the town, it was a great reservoir to contain water in case of a protracted siege.

Ten men only were spared. They had the presence of mind to urge that they had "hidden stores in the fields,"* the secret of which was known only to themselves—consisting of wheat, barley, oil, and honey. This is an interesting indication of a custom, not elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, but frequent in the East, and still subsisting, of people burying their corn and other provisions in deep pits or caverns, which were dug and covered over so very dexterously, that none but those who made the deposit could find them out, or even detect that the earth had been moved. It happens, even at the present day, that in time of war people are often spared and receive good treatment from the soldiers, on promising to make known their hidden stores in the fields.

Perhaps this practice is seen in the most extensive operation in Morocco. Mr. Urquhart tells us, that on the spot where the corn is harvested, "it is thrashed, winnowed, *and treasured up*. Holes are dug in the earth and lined with straw; these are called Matamores; there the grain may be kept a hundred or a thousand years, protected from rot, mildew, and rain. By this practice they are secured against the uncertainties of the seasons and the fluctuation in price. These reservoirs, when forgotten, may be discovered by examining the verdure in spring, when it begins to lose its freshness. Over the matamore the change is first perceptible, as it is drier beneath. Twenty years ago, four or five successive harvests were destroyed by drought and locusts; famine and pestilence ensued; and but for these stores the country must have been

* Blayney. Henderson has, 'Provisions hid in the field."

depopulated."* It is very clear, however, subterraneous granaries, *so constructed*, could only be available in dry countries.

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—THURSDAY.

EZEKIEL.—EZEK. I. 1.

Of the four greater prophets, two were priests, and both were contemporary. These were Jeremiah and Ezekiel. But while the former took an active part in the stirring circumstances of the times, and was subjected to much personal injury and wrong, the latter, already in the land of exile, regarded from afar, and in personal quiet, the strange events transacting in the land from which he had been taken, and took part in them only in mind and spirit. Hence less of the man appears in the prophecy of Ezekiel – less of personal history, of individual character, of human emotion. We know, in fact, very little about him.

In the year 599 B.C., Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah), king of Judah, was obliged, after a brief reign of three months, to submit to the king of the Chaldeans, and was led away into exile, together with many principal persons of the court and nation —the first-fruits of that harvest for captivity which the Chaldeans eventually took even to the gleanings. That the priest

* *Pillars of Hercules*, i. 409, 410. In a note this writer says: "The Lydians had the same practice. It may account for their enduring the long famine, which led to the emigration of the Tyrseni [Tyrrheni] and for the provisioning of their ships." He then gives a reference (a wrong one) to DRUMMOND's *Origines;* but that learned writer says nothing of this although he derides Herodotus for stating that they were enabled to sustain a famine of twenty-two years (according to some copies eighteen years) by fasting every other day, and amusing themselves by playing at various games in the intervals to kill time; and yet stating that although driven to this resource, at the end of this period they were able to victual the fleet that was to convey half their population to another land. That they were during this long period, supplied from such "stores in the fields;" and that the fleet was victualled from them, is certainly a more probable account of the matter.

Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, was of this first captivity, would alone show that he was a person of consequence. He belonged, indeed, to a distinguished sacerdotal family, and is seen, from chap. xi., to have been intimately connected with the principal priesthood.

It is generally supposed that Ezekiel left his native land when young; but there is no proof of this, and the probabilities are against it. The nature and vigorous priestly spirit that prevails in his prophecies (taken in connection with the fact, that the word of God came to him in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity), furnish evidence of more advanced age. Undoubtedly, also, he had served as a priest in the Temple, the plundering of which by Nebuchadnezzar he had witnessed;* for he discovers the most accurate knowledge of the ancient sanctuary in its individual parts, which must have been impressed in the deepest manner upon his senses and his memory. The comparatively not lengthened space of twenty-seven years, which, as far as we are informed, was that of his stay in exile,† agrees also with this view, as there is no account of his having survived this period.

Ezekiel was, in his exile, stationed in the northern part of Mesopotamia, at Tel Abib, on the banks of the river Chebar. His family also were with him.‡ It should not escape notice, that at this place the exiles from Judah, of whom Ezekiel was one, would meet the earlier exiles of the ten tribes, some of whom had been stationed there. This fact gives increased emphasis to the frequency of the prophet's warnings, from the example of desolated Israel. It was not, however, until Ezekiel had been five years at Tel Abib, that he was called to the exercise of the prophetic office. The embassy that king Zedekiah sent at that date to Babylon, and the letter which Jeremiah sent by that embassy,§ falls in with his call, and may be regarded as connected with it. Then, in a remarkable vision, he receives his commission to come forth among his people as a prophet, with a disclosure of the principal matters to be an-

* 2 Kings xxiv. 15. † Compare Ezekiel i. 1, with xxix. 17.
‡ See Ezekiel iii. 24; viii. 1; xxiv. 18. § Jer. xxix. 1–3

nounced to them. Commencing from this time, the functions of the prophet appear before us in his book as forming a beautifully complete, a stately and harmonious whole. They fall into two grand divisions, of which the destruction of Jerusalem forms the turning-point.* During the period before this catastrophe, the prophet chiefly uses the language of rebuke and condemnation; afterwards, of consolation and promise.

The influence which Ezekiel exercised upon his contemporaries is of the highest importance. As in the days of Elijah and Elisha, the prophets supplied, in the kingdom of Israel, the absence of a true sanctuary, and sought, as far as possible, to occupy the place of the lacking priests of Jehovah; so the priest Ezekiel, by virtue of his prophetic calling, afforded to the deserted exiles a living witness that the Lord had not abandoned them, and that even for them a sanctuary existed, in which they might perceive the gracious presence of God. The more imposing the public appearance of Ezekiel was, and the more desolate and troublous the time of his appearance, the more powerful must have been the influence he exercised. We see proof of this in those accounts which show that the people and their elders, even from the earliest period of his ministry, gathered around the prophet, and listened to his words."† In the words of God to the prophet, it is implied that the people were accustomed, at appointed times, to come to Ezekiel, to sit before him, and to receive his instruction with reverence. He was considered as a public teacher, who appointed meetings in his house as at a public school, and there, before a crowded assembly, interpreted the Divine will. Nor was this influence transitory or confined to his own generation, but was one that continued, and was much more comprehensive. If the book of Daniel be considered as having had much influence in the formation of the views of *later* Judaism, it belonged to Ezekiel to exercise an analogous influence during the period of the exile. When we perceive among the exiles a remarkable

* Ezekiel i.–xxxii. and xxxiii.–xlviii.

† Compare Ezekiel viii. 1; xi. 25; xiv. 1; xx. 1; xxiv. 18, *et seq.*; xxxiii. 31, 32.

change in their relation to the law—when we observe the colony that returned home cleaving to the law with an earnestness and constancy before unknown—an essential share in the production of this phenomenon must be ascribed to the influential labors of such a man as Ezekiel. Without such a positive influence upon the people, the unity which they preserved in such a period, and which they afterwards guarded with so much decision and tenacity, would be scarcely explicable. It cannot be doubted that the prophet himself was permitted to witness—what was denied to Jeremiah—the commencement of this favorable and hopeful change in the hearts of his people.*

Of the prophet's death, there is no authentic record. But his tomb exists at no great distance from Hillah, on the Euphrates. A curious account of this is given by the Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela:

"Three parasangs from thence [from Napacha, which is half a day's journey from Hillah], stands the synagogue of the prophet Ezekiel, who rests in peace. The place of the synagogue is fronted by sixty towers, the room between every two of which is also occupied by a synagogue; in the court of the largest stands the ark, and behind it is the sepulchre of Ezekiel Ben Buzi, the priest. This monument is covered by a large cupola, and the building is very handsome. It was erected by Jeconiah king of Judah, and the 35,000 Jews who went along with him, when Evil-merodach released him from the prison, which was situated between the river Chaboras and another river. The name of Jeconiah, and of all those who came with him, are inscribed on the wall—the king's name first, that of Ezekiel last. The place is considered holy, even to the present day, and is one of those to which people resort

* Full information on all points respecting the book of Ezekiel may be found in the Introduction (*Einleitung*) to Dr. HAVERNICK's *Commentary* thereon (*Commentar über den Propheten Ezechiel.* Erlangen, 1843). Of this introduction (of which we have here made free use), there are two English translations—one in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, for January, 1848; and another in the (American) *Bibliotheca Sacra*, in the August number of the same year.

from remote countries, particularly at the season of the new year and atonement day. Great rejoicings take place there about this time, which are attended even by the prince of the captivity, and the presidents of the colleges at Baghdad. The assembly is so large, that their temporary abodes cover twenty-two miles of open ground, and it attracts many Arabian merchants, who keep a market or fair. On the day of atonement, the proper lesson of the day is read from a very large manuscript Pentateuch, in Ezekiel's own handwriting. A lamp burns night and day in the sepulchre of the prophet, and has always been kept burning since the day he lighted it himself; the oil and wicks are renewed as often as necessary. A large house belonging to the sanctuary contains a very numerous collection of books, some of them as ancient as the second, some even coëval with the first Temple,—it being the custom, that whoever dies childless bequeaths his books to this sanctuary. The inhabitants of the country lead to the sepulchre all foreign Jews who come from Media and Persia, to visit it in consequence of vows they have performed. The noble Mohammedans also resort thither to pray, because they hold the prophet Ezekiel—upon whom be peace—in great veneration, and they call this place 'Dar M'licha [agreeable abode]: the sepulchre is also visited by all devout Arabs."

The tomb is still much frequented by Jewish pilgrims. It is a large, clumsy building, without beauty or ornament. We are unable to say whether it be the same building of which Rabbi Benjamin speaks so grandly; or, as is likely, one of more recent date erected on the same site.

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE PORTRAITURE OF JERUSALEM.—EZEKIEL IV. 1.

In the fourth chapter of Ezekiel we find one of the remarkable and elaborate instances in Scripture of instruction, warning, and prophecy by symbolical action. The prophet is di-

rected to make a representation of Jerusalem upon a tile, and in its presence to carry on, during a protracted period, by symbolical procedure, the operations of a siege, and represent its accompanying circumstances of calamity and privation.

The details are curious, interesting, and instructive; but as they have become in some points obscure by lapse of time, or from imperfect knowledge of eastern usages, we shall endeavor to explain them.

The direction to *portray* the city *upon a tile* seems at the first view a strange mode of representation. It would have been so even in Palestine at the date of the transaction; but it was the most natural and obvious mode of representation that could be devised in Chaldea, where the practice of writing and portraying, by indented figures upon broad and thin bricks or tiles, is now well known from abundance of actual remains. Great numbers of such bricks, charged with inscriptions, and with figures of animals and other objects, have been found among the ancient ruins of Chaldea and Assyria. The bricks employed for this use are mostly of fine clay, hardened in the fire. They are of various sizes, but usually of a foot square by three inches in thickness. In those that have been found, one of the broad surfaces is immensely charged with inscriptions in the wedge-shaped character; and some of them, in addition to the lines of inscribed writing, have the figures of animals and other objects, with other lines of inscription attached to them. It has hence been conjectured, that these tiles comprise public and private documents, with the names and seals of witnesses, and that the ruined edifices from which they have been obtained were the repositories of such archives. In fact, the second discovery by Mr. Layard, in his *last* visit to Nineveh, of a large chamber filled with such inscribed tiles, places this beyond question; and establishes the probability that the record-chambers at Babylon and at Ecbatana, which were successively explored for the original decree of Cyrus in favor of the Jews, were such chambers as those, and the records like these inscribed on tiles. The object, doubtless, was to give them the most enduring shape—as durable as inscription on

stone, perhaps more durable, while far less expensive and cumbersome. There is much reason to hope that the inscriptions on tile and marble already brought to light, and more that is assuredly yet to be found, will ere long be deciphered, as already has been partly done. Indeed, Colonel Rawlinson expresses little doubt of being able to read the contents of this record-chamber; and when this is accomplished, we shall doubtless acquire large additions to our present imperfect knowledge of the remote history of Assyria, Babylonia, and Media, with new and valuable materials for the illustration of Scripture. Indeed, if the decree of Cyrus had been then found at Babylon, we might cherish the hope of its being yet discovered there; and if so, as a version of it exists in the Bible, it would furnish a key for the translation of other memorials of the same kind. But the decree was found in the record-chamber at Ecbatana in Media. This is the modern Hamadan, and when we visited that place, we did not perceive any such mounds or "heaps" (to use the Scriptural term), as those of the ancient sites of the Tigris and Euphrates, the exploration of which might offer the hope of any such reward to antiquarian research.

As to the mode of representation in the case before us, it may have been by impressing the name or symbol of Jerusalem upon the tile. The direction given to the prophet is, however, to "portray Jerusalem" itself. We incline, therefore, to think that the city was actually figured in such a way as to be recognizable by the exiles whom the prophet addressed, and to whom the actual site was familiar. This might be done by means of engraving or indenting—or perhaps by color, for traces of color have been found upon the bricks of the Assyrian palaces. Either way, the representation of a town would have been no difficult process, according to the mode followed by the Assyrian artists, who have left us many representations of towns in their sculptures. It was only needful to define the site in a rough way, and to mark out upon the conspicuous points one or two of the remarkable buildings. The following engraving shows how this might be done. Indeed, there is

some reason to suppose that this is an Assyrian representation of Jerusalem; and if so, it is quite within the range of probability that we see in it a fac-simile of the portraiture of Jeru-

salem which appeared upon the tile of Ezekiel; for it may easily be supposed that when ordered to portray that city, the prophet would do so after the fashion of those acknowledged representations of it, so easy to copy, which he had seen on the walls of the Assyrian palaces. We say "had seen" advisedly; for there is much evidence in various allusions to be found in his prophecy, that he had seen and noticed with particular attention the "chambers of imagery" in these regal abodes; and if so, he must have regarded with especial interest any representations of Jerusalem which may have been found in them.

In regard to the probability of this sculpture being intended to represent Jerusalem, there can be no better authority than Mr. Bonomi, who is well acquainted with that city, and has studied its topography and antiquities. Speaking of this sculpture in his recent work on *Nineveh and its Palaces*, he says: "The sculpture represents a fortified city, built upon a considerable elevation, opposite to which is a still higher craggy hill, surmounted by a castellated tower, from the base of which a narrow stream flows down into the valley that separates the two hills. It is especially to be observed that olive-trees are growing upon both the hills, but more particularly on the one upon the summit of which is the tower; and that on the half of the city is a walk, or road, about half-way

up, below which, and at the side of the stream, is a row of tombs, or inferior houses. The relative situation of these objects exactly resembles the position of similar objects visible on approaching Jerusalem from the East. On our left we have Mount Moriah and the high wall of the temple; at our feet the brook Kedron, and the tombs of the valley of Jehoshaphat, or some inferior buildings at the base of Mount Moriah; and on our left the Mount of Olives. The chief objection to this interpretation, is the circumstance of the stream taking its rise in the Mount of Olives—a topographical inaccuracy, however, that might easily be pardoned in the Assyrian artist, if time and the Arabs had but spared us the other friezes to assist us in interpreting this relievo, and the other significant decorations of the chamber."

TWENTY-FIRST WEEK—SATURDAY.

THE SYMBOLICAL SIEGE.—EZEKIEL IV.

Ezekiel having prepared his representation of Jerusalem, proceeded to conduct the operations of a siege against it, after the process which we have already described sufficiently to render further illustration needless. Having finished his fort, his mount, and set his battering rams, the prophet proceeds to lay close siege to the city, with an iron baking-pan between him and it. This pan must be taken as a symbol of the Divine wrath,—like the seething-pot in Jeremiah i. 13; and it seems to stand for an iron or metallic wall, set up against the too late prayers and complaints of a people given over to destruction. Before this symbolic wall the prophet impersonates another set of symbols, in which he represents the condition of the besieged: thus undergoing a double representative action—a thing not unusual in Scripture. In doing this he is enjoined to lie first upon his left side for 390 days, bearing the iniquity of the house of Israel; and then to turn and lie upon his right side 40 days, bearing the iniquity of the house of

Judah. As this lying upon the *right* side is connected with the immediate action, whereas the lying on the left side represents, in part at least, that which had already passed, it seems designed to bear a peculiar significance, and to denote the severer calamity of the two. This significance lying on the right side still retains in the East, although it is, we think, contended by our medical authorities that men in general lie naturally on the right side, and that it is most wholesome for them to do so. We believe that Mr. Roberts first called attention to this peculiar notion of the East, in his *Oriental Illustrations*,—in which, however, it is to be understood, that *his* East is India. He reports that, when a person is sick, he will not lie upon his right side, because that would be a bad omen; and should he, in his agony, or when asleep, turn on that side, his attendants hasten to place him again on the left side. After people have taken their food they generally sleep a little, and then they are careful to lie on the left side, under the impression that their food digests better. "It is impossible to say what is the origin of this practice," says our author: "it may have arisen from the circumstance, that the right side is of the masculine gender, and the left feminine." Hence, although men lie on the right side, women are expected to lie on the left.

Thus lying, the prophet has to represent the famishing condition to which the besieged shall be reduced, by the nature and quantity of his food, and by the mode in which he prepares it.

He is directed to take different kinds of substances capable of being made into bread, from the best to the worst—from wheat to lentils and beans—and to mix them together for his bread, as if to show that the people should be reduced to the mere sweepings of their stores, and get so little even of this, that they should be constrained to mix them together to form a loaf of bread. This is further shown by the careful weighing out every day of the small quantity of this food he may take, and measuring out the water he may drink.

Further, to indicate the scarcity of fuel in a besieged town

when supplies from the country can be no longer brought in, the prophet was directed to bake his food by the heat of the most offensive kind of fuel. Against this his soul revolted, and he allowed himself to remonstrate; and that the burden of his representative commission might not be too onerous to him, he was graciously permitted to use the dried dung of animals to dress his food. This, however, so far impaired the completeness of the representation; because it implied that animals were present in the city, though of necessity they soon die when their provender ceases, or the people kill them for their own sustenance.

Ezekiel made no objection to the kind of fuel allowed him. He was, in fact, used to it; for the dried dung of beasts is used for fuel throughout the East wherever wood is scarce, from Mongolia* to Palestine. Its use, indeed, extends into Europe, and subsists even in England. It is not unusual in Devonshire for poor women to go out to the lanes in the evenings, collecting into baskets the cow-dung that they can find, so completely dried by the sun and air as to be quite inoffensive to the smell or touch. In the villages of the same county, where there is no access to ovens, but where wood for fuel is not scarce, this cow-dung is actually preferred for baking bread, on account of the length of time during which, when once ignited, it retains a strong, equable, and concentrated heat. Large loaves are baked in this way. The hearth being heated by a fire of the same substance, and the dough being then placed upon the swept hearth, or upon an iron plate supported upon a tripod, or upon bricks, an iron "crock" is turned over it, and over this is heaped the burning fuel, and fresh additions of the same being made, the whole is left undisturbed until the bread is baked, which it is in a most perfect manner, notwithstanding the large size of the loaves.

In regard to the use of this fuel in Western Asia, we may be permitted to repeat what we said in another work. "In some regions of Western Asia, where wood is scarce, it forms the common fuel; and as the supply is often inadequate to the

* See Huc's *Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China*, passim

occasions of the people, great anxiety is exhibited in collecting a sufficient quantity, and in regulating the consumption. In winter we have seen it used in the best rooms of some of the most respectable houses in northern Persia; and while travelling through the same country, and parts of Media and Armenia, when we formed our camp, or rested during the mid-day heat, near the villages, all the children who were old enough would come out with baskets and other receptacles, waiting long and patiently to receive all the animal dung that occurred, to secure which there was often much contention and violence among the too numerous claimants for its possession. Cow-dung is in all cases preferred, but that of all other animals is considered valuable. When collected, it is made into cakes or turves, which are laid out to dry in the sun, and in some places are stuck up against the sunny side of the houses, giving them a curious and somewhat unsightly appearance. When it is quite dry it falls off, and is then stowed away in heaps for winter use."* We may add, that these heaps are sometimes piled up on the flat roofs of the low cottages, in the form of truncated cones, imparting to the village a most curious appearance at some distance, and, when first witnessed, awakening many strange conjectures as to the nature of these constructions, ending in some amusement when the fact is ascertained.

* *Pictorial Bible* on this text. The following, from the same, describes the mode of baking:—"In the East they either heat with it a portable oven [of earthenware], or an iron plate [supported on a tripod of stones, and beneath which is the fire], or else lay their cakes upon the fire of dung. But a very common resource, in the want of a plate or an oven, is to form the dough into balls, which are placed either among live coals or into a fire of dried dung, and covered over with the same, till penetrated by the heat. The ashes are then removed and the bread eaten hot, with much enjoyment by the natives; but it sometimes contracts a flavor and appearance which is not pleasant to Europeans." It is further suggested that the prophet intended to provide such cakes or balls, baked in immediate contact with the fire; and that this made him the more abhor the sort of fuel which was first proposed to him.

In India, the peculiar notions of the people respecting the sanctity of the cow, do not prevent them from using its dung in the same way, where wood is scarce. Indeed, Mr. Roberts says, that "those who are accustomed to have their food prepared in this way prefer it to any other, and tell you it is sweeter and more holy, as the fuel comes from the sacred animal."

Twenty-Second Week—Sunday.

"THE ROD HATH BLOSSOMED."—EZEKIEL VII. 10.

In describing the imminency of the Lord's judgments upon Judah, the prophet uses these remarkable expressions: "Behold the day, behold it is come; the morning is gone forth; *the rod hath blossomed;* pride hath budded."

The expression we have specially indicated is in every way remarkable, and is very full of meaning. The rod is to be understood as denoting the instrument by which the sins of the people were to be punished. In this instance it was Nebuchadnezzar; but the consideration to which it directs us is applicable to any case of judgment. It illustrates the Lord's deliberateness in executing his judgments, as contrasted with man's haste, impatience, and precipitancy. Man, so liable to err in judgment and action, and to whom slow deliberation in inflicting punishment upon transgressors might seem naturally to result from his own consciousness of this, is in haste to judge, and prompt to act; whereas He who cannot err, and whose immediate action must be as true and right as his most delayed procedure, works not after the common manner of men, but after the manner of a husbandman in sowing and planting. When the sin comes to that state, which must in the end render judgment needful for the maintenance of righteousness upon the earth, and for the vindication of the Lord's justice and honor, the rod of punishment is planted it grows as the sin

grows, and it attains its maturity for action at the exact time that the iniquity reaches maturity for punishment. When Israel entered upon that course of sin which ended in ruin, the rod of the Babylonian power was planted, and as the iniquities of Israel increased, the rod went on growing, until, under Nebuchadnezzar, it became a great tree, overshadowing the nations; and when the full term was come, it was ripe and ready for the infliction of the judgments upon Israel, which had so often been denounced, and were so greatly needed.

Exactly the same course was followed in the case of the Canaanites whom the Israelites superseded in the possession of Palestine. In that case Israel was the rod of Canaan. The rod was planted long before "the iniquities of the Canaanites were full" for judgment; but when that time arrived, the rod of judgment had grown to blossoming, and the long-predicted punishment was no longer withheld. All was ready; the sinners were ready for judgment—the rod was ready to inflict it.

The same was the course with Babylon itself, in the present case the rod of Israel. For her pride, her arrogancy, and her unrighteousness, she was doomed to be brought low. The prophets foretold it; and they indicated the yet unplanted Medo-Persian rod as the future instrument of her chastisement. The rod was planted—it grew; and when it blossomed in strength, the Lord brake in pieces therewith many nations, as he had threatened—great Babylon being the first and the chief.

God does not now deal any differently with mankind. As signal instances might be given from the modern history of nations, as any that ancient history can produce. No century of time has been more replete with them than the present. To produce instances would lead into the field of politics, which we avoid. But this we can say, that so sure as any nation enters upon, and persists in, a course of unrighteousness, or addicts itself to any particular sin, so surely the rod of judgment is planted—so surely will it blossom for chastisement at the set time.

To come nearer: as God deals with nations, so does he deal with individuals; there is the same law for both. Whether a man professes to be in Christ or not, if he follow any unrighteous course,—if he cherish any bosom sin, mental or personal, of thought or action,—let him be assured that the rod of judgment is planted, and will in due time bear the bitter fruits of shame, fear, and sorrow to him. Because God waits till the rod has blossomed, the poor sinner may think that God tolerates him,—that he may sin without dread,—and that even to the end his peace shall flow like a river. But there is a sad and terrible hour to come, which shall teach him—perhaps too late—that the rod of judgment has all the while been growing, although he heeded it not, until it sheds over him all its blossoms of mourning, lamentation, and woe.

Nothing is more certain than God's judgments; nor is there any help for us—any refuge, unless, before the rod has blossomed, or even while it is yet blossoming, we flee to Christ, and, in that love and pity which redeemed us, seek rest for our souls, and pardon for our sins.

"Grant, Almighty God, since Thou hast recalled us to thyself, that we may not grow torpid in our sins, nor yet become hardened by the chastisements; but prevent in time thy final judgments, and so humble us under thy powerful hand, that we may seriously testify and really prove our repentance; and so study to obey Thee, that we may advance in newness of life, until at length we put off all the defilements of the flesh, and arrive at the enjoyment of that eternal rest which thine only-begotten Son hath acquired for us by his own blood."

Such is the beautiful prayer with which Calvin concludes his consideration of the passage (verses 9–18), which includes the text before us.

TWENTY-SECOND WEEK—MONDAY.

CHARACTER OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES.—EZEK. VIII.

It is a remarkable peculiarity of Ezekiel, that he, more than any other prophet, makes us acquainted with the usages of different and remote nations in regard to the subject of his utterances. The different modes in which the several prophets produce their declarations on the very same subjects, and the different style in which they illustrate them, as well as the color they receive from the character and the condition of the writer, and from the external influences to which they were subjected, are fully as great and as distinctive as among any equal number of uninspired writers,—and clearly show, that the sacred writers were allowed to invest their utterances with the qualities of their own tone of mind, habits of thought, and means of observation. The fact exists in their writings, and cannot be otherwise accounted for. But this is rendered quite compatible with that fulness of inspiration which their introductory formula of, "Thus saith the Lord," necessarily supposes, by assuming that the Divine Spirit was graciously pleased to secure the intellectual sympathy of the prophet in the work to which he was called, by imparting its communications in the form, and with the circumstances, most congenial to his own mind and tastes, and in the form which enabled him the more readily to grasp its purport, and to identify himself with it in the act of its transmission through him to those for whom it was intended.

Some people do not like to speak of the distinctive peculiarities of the matter and manner of each prophet's utterances, lest they should thereby bring into question the completeness of their inspiration: but the thing does undeniably exist; and under the view of this important matter which we take, it becomes quite allowable and proper to mark out the distinguishing qualities which the Lord's messengers evince in their writings. This we have freely done as occasion required. And as

attention has been called to the subject by the peculiarity we have indicated, it may be well to consider some other points in which the writings of Ezekiel are distinguished from those of the other prophets.

We may then say, that the prophecies of Ezekiel are full of images, of comparisons, of allegories, of parables, of personifications, and of descriptions, in which the prophet depicts his objects with such abundance of details and richness of colors, as leave little or nothing for the imagination of the reader to supply. When he launches the thunders entrusted to his hand against the crimes and prevarications of an apostate people, it is always with a vehemence and a warmth of feeling which no other prophet equals. In the ardor with which he burns, the crimes which arrest his attention are represented in all their blackness and deformity, and his diction seems then to take the hideous hues of the vices which he censures.

The standard description of Ezekiel's characteristics is still that of Lowth; and, although open to question in some points, it is, as a whole, correctly discriminating. He says:* "Ezekiel is much inferior to Jeremiah in elegance; in sublimity he is not even excelled by Isaiah: but his sublimity is of a totally different kind. He is deep, vehement, tragical; the only sensation he affects to excite is the terrible; his sentiments are elevated, full of fire, fervid; his imagery is crowded, magnificent, terrific, sometimes almost to disgust; his language is pompous, solemn, austere, rough, and at times unpolished; he employs frequent repetitions, not for the sake of elegance, but from the vehemence of passion and indignation. Whatever subject he treats of, that he sedulously pursues; from that he rarely departs, but cleaves as it were to it, whence the connection is in general evident and well preserved. In many respects he is perhaps excelled by the other prophets; but in that species of composition to which he seems by nature

* We cite Gregory's translation, which had Lowth's own sanction. But those who can, had better look to the original Latin, which, in this part at least, is rich in felicitously discriminating epithets, imperfectly represented in the translation

adapted—the forcible, the impetuous, the great and solemn—not one of the sacred writers is superior to him. His diction is sufficiently perspicuous: all his obscurity consists in the nature of his subjects. Visions (as, for instance, among others, those of Hosea, Amos, and Jeremiah) are necessarily dark and confused. The greater part of Ezekiel, towards the middle of the book especially, is poetical, whether we regard the matter or the diction."

The general sentiment of Biblical scholars scarcely supports Lowth in comparing the sublimity of Ezekiel with that of Isaiah. It seems to be agreed that neither sublimity nor elegance are the distinguishing characteristics of the diction of this prophet. The style is generally prosaic, without that parallelism which we have formerly indicated as of the essence of Hebrew poesy. The amplification of his images, and the luxuriancy of his details, rarely convey to the soul that sentiment of sublimity by which it is ravished and transported. His real character is that of abundance, fecundity, impetuosity, vehemence, and exaggeration. He turns the same idea over and over in all its different aspects, that it may enter more sharply and deeply into the soul. He rather neglects regularity and elegance, as well as the simply natural in style and expression, in order that he may astonish, alarm, and strike the imagination by his terrible tableaux. He passes abruptly from the figurative to the literal, and from the literal to the figurative, without any manner of notice to the reader. If to our severe taste some of these images appear extravagant and unnatural, it is only necessary to reflect, that the contemporaries of the prophet were doubtless accustomed to strong and exaggerated imagery; and that allegories more regular and nicely studied, would, however pleasing to us, have failed to excite and nourish eastern imaginations. The most esteemed Sanscrit, Arabic, and Persian poems are full of images and figures more strange and gigantic than any to be found even in Ezekiel; and this proves, that in order to judge rightly of the Hebrew poets, it is needful to place ourselves in the East, among a people whose imaginations are infinitely more ardent

and more exalted than our own. But although Ezekiel does often—more often than any other prophet—employ figures which may appear to us exaggerated and unnatural, his book contains many pieces of figurative description, from which the severest taste formed on modern occidental rules and habits, cannot withhold its admiration. However, all such discussions regarding the style and manner of the sacred writers, must be written and read under the caution given by one of Ezekiel's translators:* "The holy prophet is not to be considered merely as a poet, or as a framer of those august and astonishing visions, and of those admirable poetical representations, which he committed to writing; but as an instrument in the hands of God, who vouchsafed to reveal himself through a long succession of ages, not only in divers parts, constituting a magnificent and uniform whole, but also in divers manners,—as by voice, by dreams, by inspiration, and by plain or enigmatical vision."

The point to which, as characteristic of Ezekiel, we began by directing attention, seems never to have been noticed. We owe to him the clearest account of the forms of idolatry among different nations, to be found in any one portion of the Bible; the fullest and most interesting account of early commerce, and the productions of different countries, that exists in all ancient literature, and which to this day forms the basis of all historical speculation on the subject; and he has furnished us with a remarkable description of the usages of sepulture in nations far apart. All this admits of interesting corroborations from modern researches; and they cannot fail to suggest that Ezekiel was a man of cultivated mind and enlarged observation, who had noted, with a degree of interest unusual for a Jew in that age, the circumstances tending to illustrate the condition and sentiments of different nations, which he could ascertain by inquiry, which had been given to him by report, or which enforced and voluntary travel had brought under his personal notice.

* Archbishop Newcome.

TWENTY-SECOND WEEK—TUESDAY.

CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY.—EZEKIEL VIII.

The eighth chapter of Ezekiel is that to which we yesterday referred as exhibiting the prophet's portraiture of the prevailing idolatries of his time. From this we have the melancholy fact, clearly and graphically set forth, that in the age of Jerusalem's doom, the Jews had fallen into all the idolatries of their Egyptian, Phœnician, and Assyrian neighbors, and simultaneously practised them, apparently at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, producing by their combination, and with a profession of allegiance to Jehovah, an abomination worse than any of these idolatries taken singly could have been—and forming a most cogent justification of their condemnation, and an awful elucidation of the causes of their ruin. We knew this before, from the dispersed intimations of the other prophets; but not so as to impress the fact deeply on the mind, as is done here by Ezekiel who brings the matter visibly before us, and makes us, with himself, spectators of the awful scene.

In the visions of God he conceives himself taken to Jerusalem, where, in the inner court of the temple, his attention is directed to a chink or hole in the wall, which he is ordered to enlarge, on doing which he finds a door which had not before been obvious. "I went in," he says, "and looked; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel *portrayed upon the walls*."

This is clearly the Egyptian form of idolatry. The Rev. W. Jowett quotes this text as furnishing an exact description of the "chambers of imagery" in that country; adding, "the Israelites were but copyists, the master sketches being to be seen in all the temples and tombs of Egypt." In that country the walls of the inner sanctuaries of the temples, as well as the tombs and mystic cells, are to this day covered with representations, sculptured or painted in vivid colors, of sacred animals, of gods in human form and under various circumstances, or in vari-

ous monstrous combinations of the human and bestial shapes. The temples alone would furnish sufficient illustration, but that of the tombs seems the most exactly appropriate, for they furnish just such chambers as the prophet gained access to, decorated in the same manner; and there is little doubt, from the nature of these decorations, from their connection with the temples, and other circumstances, that they were not merely tombs, but were also used for the celebration of the darker mysteries and superstitions of the most debasing idolatry the world has ever witnessed.

In reading Dr. Madden's account of the way in which he got access to the chamber of imagery of the temple of Edfou, we were strongly reminded, not only of the similar chamber which the prophet saw, and which it seems that some leading Jews had secretly connected with the temple of Jerusalem, but of the mode in which he had gained access to it. The roof of this temple forms the site of an Arab village, and the whole interior is so filled up with rubbish that it had been deemed impossible to enter. Hassen, an old man, grateful for some medical relief, disclosed to Dr. Madden a *secret passage*, which had never before been made known to any Frank, and through which he offered to conduct him. "Considerably below the surface of the adjoining buildings, he pointed out to me *a chink in an old wall*, which he told me I should creep through on my hands and feet; the aperture was not two feet and a half high and scarcely three feet and a half broad; my companion had the courage to enter first, thrusting in a lamp before him. I followed, and after me the son of the old man crept also; the passage was so narrow that my mouth and nose were sometimes buried in the dust, and I was nearly suffocated. After proceeding about ten yards in utter darkness, the heat became excessive, breathing was laborious, the perspiration poured down my face, and I would have given the world to have got out; but my companion, whose person I could not distinguish, though his voice was audible, called out to me to crawl a few feet further and I should find plenty of space. I gained him at length, and had the inexpressible satisfaction of

standing once more on my feet. We found ourselves in a splendid apartment of great magnitude, and adorned with sacred paintings and hieroglyphics. The ceiling, which was also painted, was supported by several rows of pillars.

It would be interesting to trace the steps, by which the Egyptians descended from the primeval truths of the patriarchal faith, which their ancestors shared with all the children of Noah. It might be possible, from the materials extant, to do this through deeper study and closer investigation than has yet been given to the matter. It is likely that the earliest, and therefore most just, conceptions of the Almighty entertained by the Egyptians, find a memorial in their tried representation of his abstract existence, his essential nature, and his relation to the visible universe; AMUN, the Hidden One; KNEPH, the Great Spirit; KHEM, the Universal Creator. But long before the commencement of the historical period, this conception of the Deity had become obscured, and the Egyptian pantheon was filled with all imaginable inventions—the greater gods and the lesser—a menagerie of all living things—a medley of all symbols and emblems, downward from the awful triad to the vilest reptile, and the most unseemly objects in nature.

That, amid all this, the priesthood retained or possessed the knowledge of the great truths to which we have referred, is unquestionable; and, indeed, they were entertained by the higher order of minds in all ages and countries. They believed in a Being or beings abstract or unknown, or known only through his own manifestations and they believed in a continued existence, if not in the immortality of the soul, and in a moral government. Whether these were, as we have supposed, relics of a primeval revelation, or the dictates of reason, we know not; nor is it of much consequence, for St. Paul affirms the light of nature to be sufficient for *these* things. Rom. i. 19, 20. But to the charge against the leaders of opinion in ages and pagan countries, the Egyptian priesthood are especially open; that they concealed, or exhibited only in inscrutable symbols, and disclosed only as high secrets to the initiated few, what they thus actually knew; and taught what they did not

themselves believe, or did not believe in the sense in which they wished to be understood by the people. "They took upon themselves to conclude, that the true doctrine was not suited to the vulgar; that an abstract faith, and an invisible deity, were insufficient guarantees for order and religion; and hence they set about inventing a more popular faith, and a more imposing form of worship." "They concealed the great purifying verities from others; hid what they themselves knew of truth under forms and symbols, and hieratic language, which only themselves could understand. For the abstract verities they substituted rites and ceremonies, and objects of worship, the tendency of which they knew to be injurious, and that they must as certainly darken the mind and debase the character, as that an opaque body must cast a shadow, and a cloud obscure the rays of the rising sun." *

TWENTY-SECOND WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

THAMMUZ.—EZEKIEL VIII. 14.

When the prophet had sufficiently viewed the abominations of the chamber of imagery, he was taken elsewhere to witness a still greater abomination. He beheld "women weeping for Tammuz," at the north gate of the house of the Lord.

This Tammuz, or rather Thammuz, was no other than the Adon or Adonis of the Phœnicians; and what the prophet de-

* Beldam's *Recollections and Scenes and Institutions in Italy and the East.* London, 1851. Chap. xx.,—in which the subject of Egyptian idolatry is ably discussed, though in a more *tolerant* spirit towards idolatrous symbolization, *as such*, than the Bible sanctions. The grossness of the Egyptian symbolization shocks him rather than its essence, which he seems to regard as a necessary evil, in the absence of such direct revelation as the Hebrews possessed. Volumes might, however, be written, and have been written, on these matters. The doctrine of the Egyptian priesthood respecting *reserve in the imparting of religious truth*, exists in our day, and has found Christian advocates.

scribes in this passage, is the annual mourning commemoration for his death, which the women of Israel celebrated after the example, and doubtless at the same time, as the Phœnician females, who kept themselves seated in the night-time before their houses, shedding abundant tears, with their looks steadfastly directed towards a certain point in the north. The solemnity was solstitial, and fell towards the end of June, in the month called Thammuz, whence, perhaps, the idol derived the name he bore among the Hebrews; for it is not credible that they would, as some suppose, distinguish one of their months by the name of an idol.

The feast—for, as a whole, it was such, the morning being soon turned into joy—was essentially the same as that of Osiris in Egypt, with only some unimportant variation in accessories; and the essential identity of the gods and of the ceremonials was acknowledged both by the Egyptians and the Phœnicians. It was a very popular celebration, and extended not only into Israel, but to all Syria and to Greece; but its chief seats were Byblus in Phœnicia first, and in later times Antioch in Syria, Alexandria and Athens; but in the last-named place, the feast instead of being solstitial, as in the East, was equinoctial, falling in April or May, at the new moon.

The myth or legend of Adonis comes to us through the Greeks and Romans in different versions, which it is not easy to reconcile; and therefore those who treat of the matter commonly take from the number that one which they like best or think most intelligible. The same leading idea and signification intended to be conveyed, may easily be traced in all the forms of this myth—in the most recent no less than the most ancient. The earliest and simplest of its forms relates that Aphrodite, who is the Ashtoreth of the Bible, the Astarte of the Greeks, and the Venus of the Romans—being charmed with the beauty of the infant Adonis, concealed him in a chest, and consigned him to the care of Persephone,* who, on discovering the nature of the treasure in her keeping, refused to give it up. The case was brought before Jupiter, who decided the dispute by

* The same known as Proserpina among the Romans.

decreeing that he should spend one third of the year with Aphrodite, another third with Persephone, and that the other third should be at his own disposal—and his choice was to give his four months to Aphrodite, thus remaining eight months in the year with her, and spending the other four in the gloomy abode of his other patroness.

The additions which we derive from other accounts amount to this: Adonis, growing up into a fine young man, was greatly loved by his patroness Aphrodite, who dreaded the danger from wild beasts to which his passionate attachment to the pleasures of the chase exposed him. Nor without reason; for one day he was mortally wounded by a wild boar from the forests of Lebanon—sent as some accounts add, by the vindictive jealousy of Ares (Mars) to destroy him. When she heard of this disaster, Aphrodite flew to the spot, and sprinkled nectar upon his blood, from which immediately flowers sprung up.* On his death, Adonis was obliged to descend into the lower world; but it was, at the earnest solicitation of Aphrodite, granted to him that he should spend six months in every year with her in the upper world.

The great feast of Adonis commemorated these circumstances. It consisted of two parts—the one consecrated to grief, and the other to joy. In the days of grief, the votaries mourned the disappearance of Adonis; in the days of gladness, they celebrated his discovery and return. The two feasts were consecutive, but did not everywhere succeed each other in the same order. At Byblus, which was the head-quarters of this worship, the feast of lamentation came first; but at Alexandria, and probably at Athens, the feast of joy had the precedence. It was composed of all kinds of funeral ceremonials in honor of the dead. The women in particular gave way to the most vehement transports of grief for the lost god. The only observance like this in modern times, is the annual mourning of the Persians for Hossein; and whoever has witnessed that, or read of it, will understand how frantically *real* the grief excited by

* The *Flos Adonis*, common in our gardens, connects itself with this tradition.

such solemnities may become. At Byblus, the women often cut off their hair on this occasion; and it was deemed an acceptable and appropriate act, to offer up this god in his temple that more costly and shocking sacrifice, which, with other enormities, rendered this a "greater abomination" in the Divine view, than even the debasing worship carried on in the Egyptian chambers of imagery.

Besides the lamentations customary in the East, doleful songs were chanted to the accompaniment of pipes. The image of Adonis was placed on a funeral bed, or upon a catafalque, sometimes colossal, as at Alexandria, where the feast was celebrated with a pomp and grandeur truly regal. The Idyll in which Theocritus gives a graphic account of the festival of Adonis, as celebrated at Alexandria under the auspices of Arsinoe, wife of Ptolemy Philadelphus, enables us to realize a strong impression of the great magnificence of this solemnity. In this we may especially remark the description of the bed on which the image of the demigod reposed, around which were crowded a multitude of emblems, the greater part of them designed to express the influence of the sun upon vegetation, and upon physical life in general. Among the most significant symbols of this kind were "the gardens of Adonis." Earthen vases or silver baskets were filled with mould, in which, as the time of the feast approached, were sown wheat, fennel, lettuce, and some other seeds, which, by the effects of concentrated heat, covered the mould with green sprouts in about eight days. This quick germination of the seeds, and rapid development of the seedlings, as well as the equally rapid decay of this factitious herbage when left to itself, was a most significant emblem of the whole mystery, which was set forth in the fable and the rites of Adonis, to obvious explanations of which we are now led.

Adon means "Lord," a title usually applied to the sun. Adonis was the sun. The upper hemisphere of the earth, or that which was regarded as such, was anciently called Aphrodite, and the lower hemisphere Persephone. Therefore, when the sun was in the six inferior signs of the zodiac, he was

said to be with Persephone; and when he was in the six superior, with Aphrodite. By the boar that slew Adonis, winter was understood; for that rough and fierce animal was not inaptly made the emblem of that rigid season. Some, however, think that Adonis rather denoted the fruits of the earth, which are for a season buried in darkness, but at length appear flourishing above the ground. When, therefore, the seed was cast into the ground, it was said that Adonis had gone to Persephone; but when it sprouted up, that he had revisited the light and Aphrodite. Both interpretations may be combined, for most of the ancient fables of this sort bore comprehensive meanings; but there can be no doubt that the general reference of the whole is to the death of nature in winter, and its revival in spring.

There flows down from Lebanon a river, the waters of which, at a certain season, acquire a reddish tinge. As this occurred about the feast of Adonis, it suggested to the ready fancy of the heathen, that this discoloration of the water arose from the sympathy of nature with the death of Adonis. Hence the river was called after him, and its stream was supposed to be tinged by his blood. The phenomenon is still observed, the water of the river giving its redness to the sea for a considerable distance at its mouth. This circumstance, caused doubtless by the red earths washed into the river by heavy rains, or by its stream being there so raised in its beds, as to wash some ochreous cliffs, may very possibly have given rise to the whole fable,—Milton's allusion to which will occur to many readers:—

> "Thammuz came next behind,
> Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
> In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
> While smooth Adonis from his native rock
> Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
> Of Thammuz, yearly wounded."

WENTY-SECOND WEEK—THURSDAY.

COB-WALLS.—EZEKIEL XIII. 10, 11.

In the thirteenth chapter of his prophecies, Ezekiel employs an image derived from the work of builders. "One built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar. Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it."

These words have to us no very distinct meaning. We cannot pretend to have understood them ourselves, until a day's detention to rest our beasts in a Median village gave us leisure and opportunity to watch, for the first time, the process of building a new house or cottage. The men were building it with "cob-walls;" so called in Devonshire and Cornwall, where the same process is followed, and where we had often observed it without being struck with its suitability for the elucidation of this text, until we saw the same thing in the East. So it is often that the thing itself suffices not, unless we have also the place of the thing, to afford the clue to the kind of information it is capable of affording. That place is not always Palestine itself; even many Scriptural customs having, as we have often alleged, ceased in that country under the many changes to which it has been subjected, which have been preserved in other countries east and west. This illustration, for instance, may now be sought in vain in that country, where the people no longer build with cob-walls, as it appears from the present, and other texts, that they formerly did. The text cannot be explained but by reference to this mode of building. Seeing that the prophet was in the country of the Euphrates, it might be doubtful whether he might not rather here refer to the mode of building in the place of his sojourn, than to that of the country to which he came. It was probably to *both;* but if to one only, undoubtedly to Palestine. This very remarkable and distinctive mode of building being found in Cornwall and Devon, and also in the East, must be referred to the Phœni-

cians, who had colonies in those parts of the island; and the colonists would naturally build their houses in the way to which they had been accustomed at home. It seems a long way from Phœnicia to Cornwall,—and yet the distance is not so great as to our own colonies, to which we have conveyed the modes of living and building of our own country. This would be a sufficient explanation; but the intervening distance is diminished by the fact, that this mode of building is found intermediately in Barbary and Morocco, where the Phœnicians had also colonies,—so that we can actually trace these cob-walls from Canaan to Cornwall by the line of the colonies of Tyre and Sidon.

If this mode of building prevailed among the Phœnicians, then it did among the ancient Canaanites also, whom the Hebrews superseded in the possession of Palestine. The Phœnicians were themselves Canaanites; and, doubtless, when the incursion of the Israelites drove the old inhabitants to the sea-shore, this maritime people and eager colonizers were glad to avail themselves of the materials for distant colonies thrown upon their hands, in the persons of those expelled nations. Certain it is, that the Jews of North Africa are firmly persuaded that the *native* inhabitants of Barbary and Morocco are descended from the nations expelled from Canaan. This belief is of little independent value, but is of importance taken in connection with corroborative circumstances, and serves much "to thicken other proofs," which, taken separately, might "demonstrate thinly."

If the Hebrews, in leaving Egypt, had gone to a new country, they would probably have built in it houses after the model of those in the land they had quitted. But they entered a country already full of towns and villages, and acquired possession of the dwellings of the previous inhabitants,—so that for some generations there could have been no need of their building houses for themselves; and when they did, they inevitably built after the pattern the Canaanites had left, and to which they had become familiar. The Jews had, therefore, no distinctive mode of building houses of their own, but followed

that which was common in Canaan, and which the Canaanites carried with them in their migrations, and the Phœnicians with their colonies.

But what is a cob-wall? It is a wall made of beaten earth rammed into moulds or boxes, to give the parts the requisite shape and consistence, and so deposited, by the withdrawal of the mould, layer by layer upon the wall, each layer drying in its place as the work proceeds. The blocks are usually of considerable size, and are of various quality and strength, as well as of cost, according to the materials employed, and the time expended upon them. The simplest are merely of earth, or of earth compacted with straw. This is the kind the prophet had in view, and that used in Devon and Morocco, as well as in the East. It cannot stand against heavy rains; and, therefore, unless the climate be very dry, requires to be faced or coated with a *tempered mortar* of lime or sand, as a fence against the weather. Without this, the body of the wall is liable to the contingencies described by the prophet.

A superior kind of cob is made of these latter ingredients in combination; and if well and perseveringly beaten up together, forms the material for a wall of the most solid character, impervious to the influence of the weather, and almost of time. This is seldom seen now anywhere except in very old walls; but the mode of their preparation is well described in the narrative of a Christian slave in Morocco in the seventeenth century; and the passage is the more curious from the analogy it suggests to the similar employment of Jewish captives in Egypt.*

"Our work and daily labor was continually building of houses and walls; the material and method is so very foreign, and will appear strange to my countrymen. Here there are boxes of wood, of dimensions according to pleasure. These we will fill with earth, powdered, and lime and gravel, well beaten together, and tempered with water; and when full we remove the box according to order, and withdraw the box planks, leaving the matter to dry, which will then acquire an

* Morning Series: Fourteenth Week—Monday.

incredible degree of hardness; and is very lasting, for we have seen walls of some hundred years' standing, as we are informed, and all that time has not been able to do them any prejudice. The king himself (what reason for his humor we never had the curiosity to ask him) will sometimes vouchsafe to work in the lime and dirt for an hour together, and will bolt out an encouraging word to the slaves there, viz., as I remember, 'God send you to your own countries;' but I judge he either does not speak from his heart, or else he hopes that God will not answer the prayer of such a wretch as himself." *

This superior material is now chiefly employed in the East, and, as Mr. Urquhart vouches, in Morocco for the flat roofings of houses—a matter of great difficulty, and of so much importance, that they celebrate the covering in of houses, with ceremonies analogous to those which we employ in laying the foundation-stone. "Over the wood-work earth is first beaten down, then a layer of earth and lime, and then the pure lime: each layer is separately beaten. They use a small paving-mallet. They work by gangs, and strike in cadence with short strokes, singing in concert, and producing a strange melody that resounds through the neighborhood of their silent cities, startling the echoes, which recalls the song of 'Adria's Gondolier;' but the words convey simpler thoughts, and a more devotional spirit. One strain runs thus:—

'Yalla wo yalla amili dinu yarbi;
Yalla wo yalla an azziz yarbi.'

O God! O God! Eternal art thou, O my Lord.
O God! O God! Dear to me art thou, O my Lord."†

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* *Captivity of T. Phelps.* London, 1685.

† *Pillars of Hercules,* which contains some curious but discursive speculations on Moorish architecture. The author felt at a loss to make out the etymology of the word cob, as applied to this wall in Devon and Cornwall. The word "is neither Teutonic nor Celtic, Greek nor Latin, Hebrew nor Arabic." He thinks it may come from Cubbe—Arabic for a tomb, which we doubt. Mr. Urquhart adds, "That whatever be the origin, many English derivatives show that *cob* meant both wall and 'beating.' *Cobweb*, the web and the wall

TWENTY-SECOND WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE PARTING OF THE WAY.—EZEKIEL XXI. 21

THE Ammonites appear to have revolted against the Chaldean sway at the same time with the Jews; and when the king of Babylon commenced his march with the purpose of reducing them to obedience, he seems to have been undecided whether to direct his march against Jerusalem or against Rabbah. When, however, he came to "the parting of the way," to the point where it became necessary to decide in which direction to lead his forces, he resorted to divination to determine the question for him, a favorite resource among the ancients in doubtful contingencies, to save themselves the trouble and responsibility of decision, by casting it upon their gods and their diviners.

It is at this point the prophet sets the great king before us. "Appoint a way that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced. For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images (*teraphim*), he looked in the liver." The result was that he should go against Jerusalem, for "At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering-rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort."

The divination by means of *arrows*, indicated in this passage, is entitled to particular attention, as that, or something in principle like it, was of remote antiquity and extensive prevalence, and still subsists in some parts of the world. As practised by Nebuchadnezzar, it is to be explained by a reference to the form of divination known to have been in use among

cobden, hole in the wall; *cobler*, one making frequent use of the hammer; *cobbing*, a school-boy term for thrashing with a knotted handkerchief, besides many others.—*Cobbett, Cobham* [*Cobbe[illegible]*; *cob*, as applied to a break-water—Lyme *cob*."

the Chaldeans. They marked upon the arrows the names of the places they had in view, or the alternatives they submitted to this determination. They then drew the arrows from the quivers at a venture, and the one that first came forth with one of the marks upon it, was regarded not only as supplying the response required, but as manifesting the will of the gods, and as conveying an assurance of success in the enterprise in view. In this case, for instance, we are to suppose that the name of Jerusalem, or a sign representing that city, was marked upon an arrow, and that of Rabbah upon another; and as the arrow for Jerusalem came forth first, the king and his army forthwith took the road to Jerusalem without any further hesitation.

There were among the ancients various modes of consulting the gods by means of such things as rods and arrows. Some of these are curious in the details, though they all resolve themselves into the same essential process.

The ancient Germans used to cut a branch from a fruit tree into several pieces, and after marking them with certain characters, cast them at hazard upon a white cloth. Then the father of the family, if the business took place in a private house, took up the pieces one after another, and drew omens of the future from the inspection of the marks upon them, or rather, we conclude, from the order or sequence in which the marks were presented. This was, in principle, similar to the modern fortune-telling by cards, which, perhaps, owes its origin to this practice. The Scythians had also modes of divining by branches or twigs from growing trees; and they seem to have been particular as to the species of the trees to which they resorted for this purpose, the willow being held in particular esteem. This is a curious fact as reminding one of the willow "divining rods" of the treasure-seekers and water-finders of two or three hundred years ago. The divination by reeds, rods, branches, or bits of wood, was also common among the Persians and Greeks; and seems, from Hosea iv. 12 to have found its way among the Israelites: "My people asked counsel of their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them." This is

admitted by Jewish writers, particularly by Maimonides, who, in his treatise on idolatry, says that one who wished to know the future offered some perfumes, and, holding in his hand a rod of myrtle, pronounced certain words. He then stooped down as if to listen to some one underneath, whose answers he could understand in the spirit without the aid of words. And in another place he says, that one who consults his staff leans on it until he knows that of which he inquires.

More exactly parallel to the instance before us is a practice that existed among the Arabs, and was much used by them on public and private occasions, but which has now, we believe, fallen into disuse. They used three unfeathered arrows, upon one of which was written, "Command me, Lord;" upon another, "Forbid (or prevent), Lord;" and the other had nothing written on it. The arrows were put into a bag, from which they were drawn by the inquirer. If the one drawn was the first, it was regarded as an affirmative response; if the second, as a negative; and as no particular significance was attached to the blank arrow, the drawing of it occasioned the recommencement of the operation.

There is another species of divination by arrows, in use among the Turks and Moors, which will be best understood by an actual instance which we find in *Purchas, his Pilgrims*, in a narrative of the capture of the ship "Jacob," by Algerine pirates, in 1621. We learn that every large ship of the corsair was provided with a diviner, who was often consulted, and by whom the commander was guided in his determinations. When two large vessels hove in sight, the commander of the ship, in which the narrator was held captive, was afraid to give chase lest they should prove to be Spanish ships of war; it is on occasions of this kind that the diviners are consulted; "Then they have two arrows and a curtle-axe, lying upon a pillow naked; the arrows are one for the Turks, and the other for the Christians. Then the witch readeth [a chapter of the Koran]; and the captain, or some other, taketh the arrows in their hand by the heads; and if the arrow for the Christians cometh over the head of the arrow for the Turks, then do they advance

their sails, and will not endure the fight, whatsoever they see; but if the arrow of the Turks is found, on the opening of the hand, upon that of the Christians, then will they stay and encounter with any ship whatsoever." The writer does not seem to have been aware that it is alleged that during the reading by the diviner, the arrows, however firmly grasped, were moved and agitated by a strong compulsion, over which the man who held them had not the least control.

In the Assyrian sculptures there are several representations of what appears to be acts of divination. It is thought that when the king appears with an arrow in each hand, as sometimes happens, he is divining by arrows.

TWENTY-SECOND WEEK—SATURDAY.

PAINTED SCULPTURES.—EZEKIEL XXIII. 12–15.

THERE are some remarkable allusions in the twenty-third chapter of Isaiah to the personal appearance and attire of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, which may well detain our attention.

It is distinctly represented that the Jews were much struck by the fine persons of the Assyrian warriors, who are described as "all of them desirable (or handsome) young men;" and scarcely less by their splendid and becoming raiment, and their general appearance, especially their cavalry; "captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses." The impressions we derive from the sculptures of Nineveh fully correspond with these intimations; and in describing the Assyrians as there represented, the same terms might be employed. As here seen they were clearly a fine race of men, with strongly-marked and noble features, and with robust frames, full of animal life and vigor. They are visibly men of action rather than of thought. We see little that is intellectual, or only of such intellect as is found to accompany and suffices to direct physical power. They seem, in fact, the model of a military people, born to fight and used to conquer.

Among people of this order, we always find a great love of richness and splendor in dress and ornament, and, accordingly, there is no nation represented in ancient sculptures which exhibits so much gorgeousness of dress, and variety and splendor of ornament. As Layard remarks, "The Assyrians were celebrated at a very early period for the magnificence and luxury of their apparel. 'The Assyrian garments' became almost a proverb; and having first been borrowed by the Persians, descended at a later time even to the Romans." These robes, as portrayed in the sculptures, confirm the traditions of their beauty and costliness. The dress of the higher classes is richly adorned with tasteful embroidery; and in its form, in all classes, realises the difficult idea of a dress graceful yet suited for action—an idea in which the nations of modern Europe, with all their pretensions to superior taste, have in nearly all ages so signally and egregiously failed. Whatever admits of ornament in the dress, the weapons, the trappings of horses, is ornamented; and although the effect is "gorgeous," it does not make the same adverse impression as the tawdry and unmeaning magnificence of modern eastern princes, because every ornament is not only tasteful in itself but appropriate in its application. It is not an unmeaning adjunct, like a jewel in a swine's snout or in a Hindoo rajah's turban, but is made a part of, and a finish to, that to which it is applied. We hear much now about "art-manufacture" in the application of art to the ornamentation of dress, weapons, and utensils. The ancient Assyrians understood the principles of this art very well, or rather their correct taste guided them right where most other ancient nations failed.

Further, we are told that the Jews personated in Aholibah, "saw portrayed upon the walls the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look at, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity."

The Babylonian remains which exist, show that there was a close analogy between the Assyrians and Babylonians in ap-

pearance, dress, and customs; we may, therefore, safely borrow from the former illustrations of what belonged to the latter.

From the last clause of the quotation Mr. Layard is led to think, indeed, that the prophet, who must have seen the sculptures of Nineveh, had in view the figures of the Chaldeans as represented in them among the other subjects of the Assyrian empire. There is reason in this; for the intimation seems to declare, that the images portrayed were not in Chaldea, but were "*after the manner* of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity." In this case, it is quite possible that the very figures we see in our museums, and represented in books, are some of the very same on which the eyes of the prophet had rested, and to which he here referred. But, it may be said, these are sculptures, and the prophet refers to color—to painting; and the passage suggests rather such painted chambers as we find among the Egyptians, and the like of which have not been found in Assyria. There *may* have been such, which have not been spared like the sculptures; or there may be such yet discovered. But the intimation of the prophet is sufficiently met by the very remarkable fact,—remarkable to us, but not to the ancients, with whom the practice was general,—that the Assyrians *applied color to heighten the effect of their sculptures*, and that the prevalence of a red color is clearly indicated in the Khorsabad remains. The colors now traceable on the sculptures are simply red, blue, and black; and these only on the hair, beard, and a few accessories. Mr. Bonomi (after Botta) raises the question, Whether we are to understand that these were the only colors employed; and that they were only used in those places where we find their traces, while the remaining portions of the figures, and the back-ground of the bas-reliefs, were entirely colorless? To this he answers, that we are still without facts to enable us to give a decided answer. "But it appears probable, that the colors were more varied, and that the *whole surface* of the bas-reliefs was covered with them. Thus, on the bricks there are other tints than red, blue, and black;—we find yellow, white, green, etc.; and there is no reason why the

Assyrians should have employed the latter colors in their bricks and not in their sculptures." The prophet's intimation certainly best agrees with the supposition, that the figures were colored in the parts in which no color now appears; but that the colors, being less lasting than the others, have been destroyed by the conflagration to which the buildings were subjected at the time of their destruction, or by time, and the earth in which they have so long been buried. Of the Assyrian red, Mr. Layard says that it exceeds in brilliancy that of the Egyptians, which was merely an earthy bole.—It nearly approaches to vermilion in the sculptures of Khorsabad, and has a brilliant crimson or lake tint in those of Nimroud.

The special reference which the prophet makes to the head-dress of these figures, receives remarkable illustration from the elaborate and highly ornamented head-dresses of the principal figures in the Nineveh sculptures, specimens of which may be seen in some of the figures given in this volume. This was a part of dress in foreigners which was equally calculated to attract the attention of the Jews, who themselves usually went about with bare heads. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that any head-covering was worn, except the crowns of the kings, the helmets of warriors, and the "bonnets" of the priests: and that they are sometimes represented as covering their heads with their mantles, would alone seem to indicate that the head had no proper covering of cap or turban. This appears strange to us; and suggests ideas of colds on the one hand, and of headaches and sunstrokes on the other. But it is attested historically, and by existing sculptures, that the people of many other ancient nations went commonly with uncovered heads. The Asiatic foreigners represented in the Egyptian monuments are generally bare-headed when not equipped for war; and this is especially the case with the Syrian peoples so represented. The Egyptians themselves,—that is, the great body of the nation—servants, workmen, laborers, and even the priests (when not actually officiating),—went not only without caps, but without hair; and we see men laboring in the brick-fields, under an all but tropical sun, with *shaven* heads. The

Greeks and Romans, also, were a bare-headed people generally, though there exist some memorials which would intimate that, among the latter, the peasantry sometimes sheltered their heads from the weather under a kind of hood.

It is all a matter of habit and training; and people who are used to it may, and do, go bare-headed, under any climate, without detriment to their health. It is possible even in this climate; for the numerous boys of Christ's Hospital, in London and Hertford, who are remarkably healthy, and more than commonly exempt from colds and headaches, go bare-headed in all weathers, though they spend much of their time in the open air all the year round. With them it is an acquired habit, for they do not enter the school till they are eight years old.

In Siam, at the present day, and notwithstanding the tropical heat, the people of all ranks not only go with uncovered, but with shaven heads; and it is stated, that the French (Romish) missionaries in that country follow this custom without detriment to their health.* A habit which is practicable in such diverse climates as those of England and Siam, is scarcely to be regarded as strange in any intermediate climates.

* "The priests adapted themselves in many ways to the usages and customs of the natives themselves; and most strikingly so in one respect,—that of never wearing any covering on their head, and never sitting in canoes that were covered over; these are two customs which the Siamese priesthood and the royal family never deviate from; for they deem it sacrilege to suppose anything should intervene between the lofty canopy of heaven and their own bald pates, excepting in their watts and temples, which are presumed to be hallowed, or in the palaces of the royal family, which are also holy, as containing anointed and sacred kings.

"How these French priests, some of whom had almost come direct from their own country to these parts, managed to avoid getting a *coup de soleil*, while skulking up and down the river with their bare heads exposed to the vertical rays of the sun that parched up the very earth, and quite baked the clay alongside the banks of the river,—this has been ever a mystery. The glare alone was sometimes sufficient to give me a headache; and yet these Catholic priests were about the healthiest set of all those residing at Bangkok."—Neale's *Residence in Siam*. London, 1852.

Twenty-Third Week—Sunday.

THE STROKE.—EZEKIEL XXIV. 15–18.

A STRANGE and deep interest belongs to one of the incidents in the personal history of Ezekiel which the course of this prophecy discloses. He was married. His wife was very dear to him; for she is called "the desire of his eyes." He knew that they must one day be parted. He must die; she too must die,—which first, was known to God only. But there was nothing in his age or state of health, nor anything in hers, to suggest that this hour of calamity was near; and probably Ezekiel, although a prophet, did as most men do in regard to this matter—refused to let his mind rest upon it, or to contemplate it with any steadiness. It may be said there are really very few who look death—their own death—steadily in the face; and there are certainly fewer still who look their wife's death in the face. And the prophet was as other men in this respect. Differences of time, of manners, of woman's social position, do not make much difference in such matters. The poor old heart is the same all through; and is everywhere, and in all time, smitten by the same barbs, and bleeds from the same wounds.

Doubt not, therefore, that Ezekiel felt as any one of us would feel on receiving the intimation: "Son of man, behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke." Strange intimation! The very terms in which it is conveyed aggravates the agony it is suited to inflict, by reminding of the value of that which he was thus suddenly to lose. She was described to him as "the desire of his eyes;" and she is to be taken from him,—not through the painful but soothing warnings of the sick-bed, by which the mind is gradually prepared to meet the worst, but suddenly "by a stroke," quick and sharp. Consider what that loss was to him. That she was a good and loving woman is implied throughout. Besides, he was now in captivity among the Babylonians; and his wife was no doubt

a sweet companion and comfort to him in the midst of all the reproaches, troubles, and difficulties he met with. And she was to be taken by one of those strokes which wound the survivors so deeply, that but for the slight preparation this very intimation offered, it may well be thought that even Ezekiel, being, though a prophet, a man such as we are, might himself also have sunk, heart-smitten by the stroke. Hence there was graciousness to him in this intimation, hard though it were.

Do we not hear the exceeding sharp and bitter cry which this intimation drew from him? Do we not see the hot tears which it wrung from eyes unused to weep,* and for that reason more hot and bitter? We hear nothing of this: we see nothing. The desire of his eyes is not only to die, but must die unlamented, save in his heart. He must "make no mourning" for her; he must "bind the tire upon his head" as usual, and not suffer his locks to float wild for her; he must "put on his shoes upon his feet," and not walk "softly and barefoot for her,"—nor for her "cover his lips," nor "eat the bread of men." These were acts of mourning from which he was interdicted; and it was hard to omit them. The world might look upon it as a heartless indifference to the memory of one so loved; and the neglect of customary observances of mourning on the part of the living, was deemed an insult to the dead. This was hard. But there was something harder yet. "Thou shalt not mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down." The other inhibitions had been easy to this. Those touched but the outer mourning; these the inner—the mourning of the heart.

And what did the prophet say to all this?

He said nothing. It was of the Lord.

And what did he do?

He knew that this was for a sign; and with this doom over the wife of his youth, so soon to be accomplished, he girded up the loins of his mind to his public duty, and told the

* Ezekiel never describes himself as moved to weeping or tears: Isaiah does sometimes, and Jeremiah often.

people of this strange and solemn matter, which it is needful they should understand.

And what then?

"In the evening my wife died."

And what more?

"And I did in the morning as I was commanded."

These simple intimations reach the utmost sublimity of moral grandeur—nay, more than that, of devout, and therefore absolute, submission to Him who doeth all things well. It was in this conviction, in the firm persuasion, that the Lord laid this burden upon him, not needlessly, but most wisely; not in anger, but with love and pity for the soul He wounded, that, like another of old, he could say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth—because Thou didst it;" and followed the great example of him of whom it is said, "And Aaron held his peace," when his sons died before his eyes.

Nay, more. It is not enough to say that he submitted to this dispensation. He acquiesced in it; because he knew that it was intended for the benefit of his people, as completing by the most signal and impressive of all, that series of literal and symbolical warnings, by which he had labored to gain the attention of his people, and to stay their downward course to ruin.

Observe well, that all commentators perceive an interval of time between this chapter and those that follow,—this being the last of the prophecies delivered before the destruction of Jerusalem. He is allowed to rest awhile in his sorrows, public and private; and when he comes forth again, it is to speak in an altered strain,—denouncing the doom of the nations which had afflicted Israel, or had exulted in her fall; and to declare the glory and blessedness which the great future had in store.

Now he was to stand as "a sign to them" from the Lord: "According to all that he hath done, shall ye do; and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord." They also should lose "the desire of their eyes,"—the city and temple of their fathers should be brought low unto the dust; and their beloved ones should perish by the sword. Yet they

should not dare, nor find occasion to satisfy their griefs with customary mournings, though they "might mourn inwardly, and pine away for their iniquities."

That this deep and sad lesson might be the more effectually taught, the devoted prophet was willing even to yield up "the desire of his eyes." He knew it would not be lost or fail of its effect. For although it should avail not for anterior warning, it would for subsequent conviction. When these things had befallen them, they would remember these forewarnings, and be constrained to acknowledge that their doom had indeed come from God, and had been most righteously inflicted; and would be among the agencies tending to that reformation that actually took place, which the prophet himself lived to witness, and in which he found the rich reward of his labors and sufferings. For these results, which it is clear he was permitted to contemplate, this great prophet was willing to take up this cross,—the heaviest, one may say, that man was ever called to bear.

"Let the Lord's servants in every age copy after this instructive example. Let them come here from time to time and contemplate one of Heaven's noblest witnesses, struggling to the last, if haply he might do something to stem the swelling tide of evil; and even at the last, when all has proved ineffectual, still readily offering himself upon the sacrifice and service,—not, indeed, of the people's faith, but still of their highest well-being, which he sought with a fervor and devotion unknown to themselves. With such a lofty spirit of consecration to the work of God, what enterprises of philanthropy might not be undertaken, and what triumphs ultimately won!"*

* Fairbairn's *Ezekiel and the Book of his Prophecy*. Edinburgh,

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—MONDAY.

RABBAH.—EZEKIEL XXV. 5.

It seems that the Ammonites were particularly loud and offensive in their exultation at the downfall, first of the kingdom of Israel, and then of Judah, with the desolation of the land and the destruction of the temple. But this malignant exultation on the part of a kindred people was abominable in the eyes of the Lord, who, with a holy jealousy, protected the sanctity of his own deep judgments; and for this and other offences of old date, the prophet pronounced the doom of Ammon,—the doom of extinction upon the people, and of desolation to their country.

Sometimes this doom took the shape of a specific denunciation against Rabbah, or Rabbath, their capital city, away in the country east of the Jordan, and east of the possessions of the Israelites on that side the river. David, in his war with the Ammonites, took it from them, and annexed it to the possessions of the tribe of Gad. It will be remembered that the siege of this place is memorable in the history of David, from his deplorable treatment of Uriah, a deserving officer employed in that service; and from the fact, that the conquest was deemed of so much importance that the king at last joined the besiegers in person, to take the glory of the final success.

On the separation of the realm into two kingdoms, this, with all the territory beyond the Jordan, went to the kingdom of Israel; and when that kingdom was dissolved by the Assyrians, or rather, probably when the tribes beyond the Jordan were first of all led into captivity, the Ammonites quietly took possession of their ancient territory, and apparently of something more. Hence their importance as a nation had materially increased when noticed and denounced by the prophets, —and thus it is that Rabbah is described as then again belonging to them; and it was undoubtedly a very flourishing place when Jeremiah foretold that Rabbah of the Ammonites should become "a desolate heap"—Jer. xlix. 2—and Ezekiel,

that it should become "a stable for camels," and "a couching place for flocks."

The doom, once denounced, was surely, though not immediately executed. Indeed, we do not know exactly *when* it was executed. We only know that it has been done; for, as the prophets foretold of this city, so at this day it lies. Meanwhile, however, it enjoyed a new lease of prosperity and wealth under the name of Philadelphia, which it derived from Ptolemy Philadelphus, who, when the country was annexed to the Egyptian crown, restored or greatly improved the city, and called it by his own name. These foreign names have rarely, however, been permanent in that country; for, while the new name would be employed by foreigners, and in all state matters, and on coins, the old name remains in use among the great body of the people, and sometimes survives in the ruins long after the foreign name has been forgotten. So, at the ruins of this city, the name of Philadelphia is altogether forgotten, while the original name of Rabbath-Ammon exists in the shape of Amman.

The very site of the place was unknown until discovered about the beginning of this century by a German traveller called Seetzen. It was visited about twelve years after by Burckhardt, an accomplished Swiss traveller in the service of an English society, and who gave a very full and satisfactory description of the place. Other travellers have since been there,—as Captains Irby and Mangles, Mr. Buckingham, M. Laborde, Lord Lindsay, Lord Claud Hamilton, and others; but this district lies so remote, that the ancient sites are much less frequented by travellers than those on the nearer side of the Jordan.

The ruins lie in a valley about twenty-two miles east of the Jordan, through which flows a stream of very clear water, full of fish. The remains are very extensive; but there are few of important buildings, except an amphitheatre, which is of great size, and is said to be the most perfect in Syria. There is also an ancient castle, and some vestiges of Roman buildings and Christian churches. Altogether, there is sufficient to

evince the former importance of the city, suggesting to the mind a melancholy contrast with the desolation in which it now lies. The Arabs, who come up periodically into these parts, like to harbor in such forsaken sites, for the sake of the shelter they can find among the ruins for themselves and their flocks, with the additional inducement that water, of good quality, is usually found in such localities. This is an old custom, and the prophets frequently allude to it as one of the incidents marking the desolation of cities bordering on Arabia. The stream of fine water at Amman doubtless forms an additional attraction to the parties of Arabs who resort to this site of ruins.

Dr. Keith, in the last edition of his *Evidence from Prophecy*, states that Lord Claud Hamilton told him that, "while he was traversing the ruins of the city, the number of goats and sheep which were driven in among them was exceedingly annoying, however remarkable as fulfilling the prophecies." Lord Lindsay found bones and skulls of camels mouldering in the area of the theatre, and in the vaulted galleries of this immense structure. He says: "The valley stinks with dead camels, one of which was rolling in the stream; and although we saw none among the ruins, they were absolutely covered in every direction with their dung. That morning's ride would have convinced a skeptic. How says the prophecy: 'I will make Rabbah a stable for camels,'" etc. He adds, "We met sheep and goats by thousands, and camels by hundreds, coming down to drink, all in beautiful condition." Mr. George Robinson also testifies: "The space intervening between the river and the western hills is entirely covered with the remains of private buildings,—now only used as stables for camels and sheep. There is not a single inhabitant remaining; thus realizing the prophecy respecting this devoted city."

These testimonials have occurred since attention has been called to the subject of the literal fulfilment of local prophecies. We add that of Mr. Buckingham, which is all the more valuable as being of anterior date. He halted for the night with a tribe of Arabs which he found encamped among the ruins, in a

hollow behind the top of the theatre. Next morning he writes in his journal: "During the night I was almost entirely prevented from sleeping by the bleating of flocks, the neighing of mares, and the barking of dogs."

These are interesting corroborations of the fulfilment of prophecy. They must have due weight upon every serious and candid mind. We are not sure, however, that too much stress has not in some instances been laid upon minute circumstances in the illustration of the local prophecies, which circumstances will be found rather generic as regards certain sites in a state of desolation, than specific in regard to the immediate locality. So this doom of a site on the borders of Arabia, becoming the resort of Arabs with their flocks and herds, is not confined to Rabbah, but is common to other ruined sites throughout this region. They are among the appropriate images and illustrations by which the desolation of cities so situated are expressed and made distinct to the mind; and finding Amman in a state of complete desolation, we should know the prophecy had been fulfilled not the less surely had we found no camels there. It is, however, interesting to find them there; but it would be dangerous to rest our faith upon such minute coincidences, and to establish in our own minds a standard of verification, which, it may be apprehended, the prophets did not contemplate, and which cannot in all cases be maintained.

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—TUESDAY.

OLD TYRE.—EZEKIEL XXVI.–XXVIII.

Tyre, so renowned in the history of commerce and navigation, occupies a large place in sacred prophecy. "The prophecies respecting Tyre do not, however, appear to have been always discreetly or faithfully explained. The traveller, having read these explanations, expects to find nothing more than a bare rock, washed by the sea, and covered with nets; and is

surprised to see a city, and to learn that the spot has never been wholly deserted." *

The truth is, that the island on which the present Tyre stands was the subject of a part only, and that the smallest part, of the prophecies respecting Tyre.

The Tyrian colony seems always to have consisted of an island, with a territory on the shore. As a maritime state, a port must always have been essential; and that the capital was first on the coast, may be inferred from the earliest mention of it by Joshua, where it is described as "the strong city Tyre."† But from Hiram's letter to Solomon, as given by Josephus,‡ and which we have no reason to suppose apocryphal, we may gather that the island was even then inhabited, and the language of Isaiah shows, that in this day the Tyrians, as might naturally be expected of the inhabitants of a maritime state, were known to the rest of the world as the "inhabitants of the island."§ The Tyrian state may then be regarded as consisting of a city and small territory on the mainland, and a port or maritime city on the island. The island bore the same relation to the capital that the port of Majermos did to Gaza, the Piræus to Athens, the Pharos to Alexandria, Leith to Edinburgh, or Deptford to London. It is possible that the two may have been connected by fortified lines along the shore, as at the Piræus, and by a causeway or bridge over the channel, like the modern castle of Sidon. We are indeed expressly told by Josephus, that, in the days of Hiram, a causeway did unite the city and the island. Thus, the old city, the island, and the adjacent territory, formed together the state of Tyre, and the subject of the prophecies.

* Beldam's *Italy and the East*, ii. 237. This intelligent and able traveller then proceeds to give his own view of the case. This view is not new, being almost entirely the same which has repeatedly been given by ourselves in the *Pictorial Bible*, *The Land of Promise*, etc. As, however, we prefer corroborating the testimony of an independent witness to the reproduction of our own statements, we avail ourselves, to a considerable extent, of Mr. Beldam's observations.

† Josh. xix. 29.

‡ *Antiq.* lib viii. cap. 2, sect. 17.

§ Isa. xxiii. 2.

If we look attentively at these prophecies, we shall perceive that they have a fourfold operation. They predict the irretrievable ruin of the then existing city, the final loss of maritime supremacy, the subversion of the royal dynasty, and a subsequent consecration to the true faith.* These all came to pass in their season; but not precisely in the way that some have imagined. It is indeed obvious that the whole of the predictions could not refer to the same spot. The question is, how to apply them; and time and history may help us through the difficulty.

The first class of predictions foretold the destruction of the city. This was to be complete and irretrievable. Not only were walls, towers, edifices, to be demolished, but also to *disappear*, the very dust was to be scraped away; it was to be built no more; and, though sought after, was never to be found.† To what city do these predictions apply? Certainly not to Insular Tyre,—for that was never totally destroyed; its edifices have never totally disappeared; and the dust has accumulated, instead of being scraped away from the rock on which it stands. It has been often rebuilt, and that with great magnificence; it has never ceased to be inhabited; and its place has always been well known. But these predictions do apply with a singular and remarkable accuracy to Old Tyre; and the incidents of the siege confirm their application to that city. There was to be a fort and mount raised against it; the city was to be covered with the dust of cavalry, and the walls to be shaken at the noise of horses and chariot-wheels. The historical particulars of the siege are not extant; but enough remains, in the statement of Josephus, to show that the city fell, as predicted, beneath the arms of Nebuchadnezzar, and was dismantled, if not entirely destroyed.‡ But the most remarkable part of the prophecy was suspended: It was foretold that this same city should become a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; that the stones, the timber, and the dust should be

* Isa. xxiii. Jer. xxvii. 3; xlvii. 4. Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. xxviii.

† Isa. xxiii. Ezek. xxvi.

‡ Joseph. *Antiq.* x. 6; *contra* Apion, i. 21.

laid in the midst of the water; that the deep should be brought up over it; that great waters should cover it; and that it should be set in the low parts of the earth.* A portion of this prophecy may indeed apply to insular Tyre, but the most striking reference is to the old city. But how was a thing so unlikely to be accomplished, except, indeed, by an influx of the sea, which some have supposed, but of which there are no geological or historical proofs? This, indeed, the prophecy may well have suggested to those who heard; but this was not the purpose the Lord had in view: and the imagination of man could scarcely have conceived the *mode* of its accomplishment, much less have foreseen it, and made it the subject of a confident and authoritative prediction. It is this *speciality* which gives the most commanding interest to this and other prophecies, and which renders them so powerful for the conviction of gainsayers. It were a hard matter to predict, in a general way, one out of the only two or three possible circumstances; but it was something to foretell a circumstance, the like of which had never before occurred, and that could not occur at any other place.

It was thus: From the days of Nebuchadnezzar to those of Alexander the Great, the old city had lain in a dismantled condition; and during all this time the prophecy had been but half accomplished. The Tyrians had meanwhile fortified themselves in their island-city,—had regained their maritime supremacy, and resumed their former arrogance and pride. Two centuries before, their ruin had been effected by a people of recent origin, and previously almost unknown; and again it was to be effected by a nation from beyond seas, and still less to be expected or feared.

The old city became, in fact, the means of destroying the new. When Alexander appeared against Tyre, he found its insular position a serious obstacle to one who had no fleet; and the resource that occurred to him is worthy of the genius of that great commander, and most undesignedly wrought out the whole purpose of God respecting Old Tyre. The presence,

* Ezek. xxvi.

close by, of the abundant ruins of the old city, suggested to him the feasibility of employing them for the construction of a mole or break-water, connecting the mainland with the island, and over which his troops might march up to the walls of the beleaguered town. It was an immense work, two hundred feet broad; and the vast quantity of materials it required may easily be conceived. In constructing it, the Old Tyre was removed bodily into the sea,—stones, timber, earth, even to the very dust,—all was removed. There it still lies, in that immense causeway, and forms a place for the spreading of nets, as the prophet foretold. What eye but that of Omniscience could have foreseen this strange result, at a time when Old Tyre stood in all her pride and glory, and proudly said, "I shall be a queen forever." And who but his inspired servants could have said to her, "They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the waters:" "thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again?" This last intimation is as surprising as any. The utter disappearance *of all trace* of an important ancient city is one of the rarest things that can happen, and is truly marvellous. Yet it is true here, as predicted,—and true here only,—affording another instance of that speciality which is so observable in the prophecies concerning Tyre. Not only has the town never been built again, but it is wholly extinct; and travellers look narrowly, but in vain, for any vestige of it. Of no city that history records, has there, perhaps, been so complete an obliteration;—the sand now covering the greater part of the space within which it must have stood. "It is remarkable," says Dr. Wilde, who has given by far the best account of Tyre that we possess, "how frequently this agent has been used for thus wiping out ancient cities from the face of the earth. Babylon, Thebes, Memphis, Luxor, Carthage, ancient Alexandria, Jericho, Balbec, Palmyra,—have all been more or less invaded by this destroying agent, which, though slower than the flame or the torrent, is not the less sure and fatal."

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

INSULAR TYRE.—EZEKIEL XXVI.–XXVIII.

When Alexander, by means so remarkably fulfilling prophecies of which he had no knowledge, obtained access for his forces to the island, he soon made himself master of the city. The Tyrians, indeed, made a most valorous and obstinate defence. But this served only to complete their doom: for the conqueror was so exasperated by this, as well as by the long delay occasioned to the execution of his designs against Egypt, that he treated the inhabitants with a degree of severity which has left a great stain upon his character. Besides 8000 men slain in the attack, 2000 were crucified after the city was taken, and 30,000 of the captives were sold for slaves. This also was a point of retributive judgment foreshown by the prophet. Tyre, among its other merchandise, dealt in "the persons of men," and to its great mart numbers of the sons and daughters of Israel had been taken for sale. The merchants of Tyre made fine bargains there. They speculated largely, knowing well how to bear away in their ships to the dearest markets the commodity which they could buy so cheaply at home. But the Lord observed this; and their disgusting avidity in making gain out of the flesh and blood of their neighbors, between whom and them a friendliness of ancient date had subsisted—and who, latterly, had many interests in common, displeased Him greatly, and this doom was passed upon them: "Behold I will return your recompense upon your own head, and will sell your sons and daughters."

The city was finally set on fire by the victors. This also had been foretold: "The Lord will cast her out; and He will smite her power in the sea, and she *shall be devoured with fire*."

But Alexander dealt her a more fatal blow than this—a blow from which she never recovered—again, accomplishing those predictions which connected this overthrow with the destruction of her maritime supremacy of such ancient date.

"Up to that period Tyre still remained mistress of the seas and its commerce was universal. The epitome of its merchandise given by the prophet Ezekiel (chap. xxvii.), is one of the most curious and interesting records of antiquity. But the blow which levelled insular Tyre was to terminate its maritime glory forever. What uninspired writer could have foreseen such a consequence? It had rallied once, and why not rally again? No! The commerce of the whole world must be changed; and a new port and mart be founded in a land the least accessible to strangers—the most averse to maritime affairs, and which must first be conquered, in order to complete the maritime ruin of Tyre. But all this was done. The erection of the port and city of Alexandria did, in fact, accomplish it; and henceforth the supremacy of Tyre disappeared. Pliny, in describing it a few years [centuries?] later, after extolling the ancient renown, observes: 'But at this day all the glory and reputation thereof standeth upon the dye of purple and crimson colors.'* Tyre continued still to be a frequented port; but its commerce was ever after limited and provincial."†

It thus continued to enjoy some degree of local prosperity down to the time of the Crusades, when Benjamin of Tudela described it as "a very beautiful city, the port of which is in the very town." But when the Christian power in Palestine declined, and the town was taken from them in 1291 by Khalil, sultan of Egypt, the conqueror razed it to the ground, that it might never more afford a stronghold or harbor to the Christians. It was never restored to any kind of importance, and has remained to this day little better than a poor village and a fishing station—for which it has been well adapted, standing, as it does, out into the sea, since it has ceased to be frequented by commercial navies. This also was foretold by Ezekiel, who declares that it should become "a place for the spreading of nets, in the midst of the sea." The image of desolation here employed—that of fishers spreading out their nets to dry on the site of a once flourishing town—is as natural

* PLIN. *Nat. Hist.* lib. ix. 36.

† BELDAM, *Italy and the East*, ii 242.

of a place situated on the sea-coast, as that of feeding and stabling cattle (as before noticed in Rabbah) is for inland desolation. And as fishermen naturally spread out their nets on any convenient spot—a beach, or a naked rock, it only becomes necessary to say that Tyre has become a fishing station, to show that this prophecy has been accomplished, without our being obliged to find—though we can do so—that some traveller has happened to say that he saw nets spread out to dry upon the strand.

Travellers of the seventeenth century notice the abundance of fish here. One of them, after alluding to the former greatness of Tyre, says: "But this once famous Tyrus is now no other than a heap of ruins; yet they have a reverent aspect, and do instruct the pensive beholder by their exemplary frailty."* Huet speaks of a monk who told him how strongly the prediction of Ezekiel was brought to his mind when he approached the ruins of Tyre, and beheld the rocks stretching forth to the sea, and the large stones strewed upon the shore, made smooth by the sun, the waves, and the wind, *on which the fishermen dried their nets.*† Our own Maundrell, towards the close of the same century, said: "The present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches harboring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing; who seem to be pictured in this place as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, that it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on." A century later, Volney, whose avowed unbelief in revelation renders his testimonies of special value, describes the place as still little better than "a village, containing only fifty or sixty poor families, who live but indifferently upon the produce of their little grounds and a *trifling fishery.*" It revived a little, especially under the rule of the Egyptian pasha; but the increasing shallowness of the harbor, and the rising prosperity of the neighboring ports, has brought it back to its previous condition, and

* Sandy's *Travailes.*

† Huet in *Demonstratio Evangelica.* The monk's name was Hadrian Parvillarius

the latest traveller "found it a wretched and deserted village though still affording a fine little harbour for boats."*

The third class of predictions concerning Tyre† foretells the ruin of the ancient dynasty so often mentioned in Scripture. The fulfilment, though less clearly recorded, may be inferred from Josephus, who, professedly quoting from Phœnician records, gives us to understand that from the time of the destruction of old Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, the reigning family were captives in Babylon; and that the state was thenceforth governed by judges or princes delegated by the Babylonian kings,‡ until the conquest by Alexander; from which time its independence entirely ceased.

There is yet another prophecy,§ speaking of a time when the merchandise and hire of Tyre should be holiness to the Lord. This may possibly refer to that assistance which Tyre was afterwards obliged to yield to the rebuilding and service of the new Temple at Jerusalem, as mentioned by Ezra.‖ Or, like other predictions of a similar kind by Isaiah, it may have foretold the early conversion of this city to Christianity. Certain it is that both results did follow. Within a few years only after the publication of the gospel, a Christian church was formed at Tyre.

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—THURSDAY.

SEPULCHRES OF ASSHUR AND ELAM.—EZEKIEL XXXII. 17–23.

In this passage the nations are represented as lying entombed in the state of death. The expressions which describe them in that state are, at the first view, very similar; but on closer inspection we find varying phrases introduced, from which we collect that amid the terms of general description, there are indications of particular customs of sepulture among

* Neale's *Eight Years in Syria, Palestine, and Asia-Minor*. 1851.
† Ezekiel xxviii.
‡ Joseph. *cont a Apion*, lib. iii. s. 21.
§ Isaiah xxiii. 18.
‖ Ezra iii. 6, 7.

the nations to which the descriptions apply. We think that the idea, that this chapter did contain such allusions to diverse sepulchral conditions, was first started by Mr. Charles Taylor in his *Fragments to Calmet*. But his elucidations of it were not well carried out; and we shall, therefore, in adopting his idea, give it our own illustrations.

This writer well remarks that "the numerous references in the sacred Scriptures, to sepulchres supposed to be well peopled, would be misapplied to nations that burned their dead, as the Greeks and Romans did; or to those who committed them to rivers, as the Hindus; or to those who expose them to birds of prey, as the Parsees; nor would the phrase 'to go down to the sides of the pit,' be strictly applicable to, or properly descriptive of, that mode of burial which prevails among ourselves—single graves, admitting one body only, in width or in length, having no openings on the sides to which the bodies may be said to go down." On this we may observe, without at present entering into further explanations, that the frequently-recurring expression in this passage, "down to the sides of the pit," has a very inadequate explanation in the sepulchral chambers—natural or excavated caverns—in the sides of which were recesses for the corpses. Many sepulchres of this description exist in Palestine, and in different parts of Western Asia.

The first reference is to Asshur in Assyria, "whose graves are set in the sides of the pit." It might have been hoped that the recent discoveries at Nineveh would throw some light on this subject. In this hope we have diligently explored the French and English books which treat of these discoveries, and have carefully examined all the engravings they contain, as well as the actual sculptures in this country. But the subject is as much in the dark as before. Layard, in acknowledging this, can only conjecture, from the resemblance between the two nations in other respects, that the funeral ceremonies of the Assyrians and Persians were similar. This is no more than we long ago maintained, and the conjecture is corroborated by the very analogous terms in which the prophet speaks next of Elam, or Persia.

That the Persians, and also the Babylonians, had modes of sculpture analogous to those of the Assyrians, is further confirmed by the resemblance in the many existing sepulchral sites upon the tombs on the Tigris and Euphrates, some of which we have ourselves had the opportunity of examining with great interest and attention. These contain urns, usually of earthenware, lined with bitumen and sometimes glazed, and in which, when opened, bones and dust are found. They are discovered in almost every situation—in mounds of ruins, in the cliffs on rivers, and even in the thick walls of ancient towns and fortresses. In some places, where the bank had fallen away, or where the stream has cut it perpendicularly, its steep face shows multitudes of such urns, from the top of the cliff down to the water's edge. With the knowledge that each urn contains the mortal remains of a human being, who lived in ancient times, and with the recollection that what we witnessed were but the edges of broad layers of urns, the sight was very awful, suggesting such an idea of the exceeding populousness of the grave, as we have never found any other occasion of realizing with equal force. "Asshur is there and all her company"—"There is Elam, and all her multitude round about her grave."

The places in which these urns occur, in every variety of form and size, with the manner in which they are arranged, sometimes in regular rows, and sometimes not, and occasionally with lines of brickwork connected with them, may sanction the idea suggested by one of the Parsee books, called the *Desatir*, that most of the public buildings had within their mass receptacles of various kinds, such as cellars, niches, etc., for these sepulchral urns. Sepulchral they certainly are, from the nature of the contents; but as few of them are large enough to contain the adult human body, the corpse could not have been deposited entire, but must have been subjected to some process of decomposition. The common statement, that bodies were not burnt in this region, is incorrect, for we have ourselves seen bones that bore manifest traces of the action of fire. But this was not always, perhaps not often the case; and we

incline to think, that the curious old book, to which we have referred, supplies a sufficient and satisfactory explanation. This work consists of a short ancient text with a longer and more recent comment. The passage bearing on the present subject is one of curious interest, not only from the accounts it gives of the modes of sepulture in those regions, but from the explanation it suggests of some passages of Scripture bearing on the subject. The lines marked in italics seem to afford a sufficient explanation of the passage before us, taken in connection with the particulars already furnished from our personal observation. The text is simply this: "A corpse you may place in a vase of aquafortis, or consign it to the fire, or to the earth." The appended comment is this: "The usage of the Fersendajians (Persians) regarding the dead was this. After the soul had departed, they washed the body in pure water, and dressed it in clean and perfumed vestments. They then put it into a vase of aquafortis, and when the body was dissolved, carried the liquid far from the city, and poured it out; or else they burned it in the fire, after attiring it as hath been said; *or they made a dome and formed a deep pit within it, which they built and whitened, with stone, brick, and mortar; and on its edges niches were constructed and platforms erected, on which the dead were deposited:* or they buried a vase in the earth, enclosing [the remains of] the corpse therein; or they buried it in a coffin in the ground. But in the estimation of the Fersendajians, the most eligible of all these was the vase of aquafortis." And with reason, we should think. It is the most poetical and suggestive mode of sepulture we ever met with, and brings to mind the saying of the wise woman of Tekoah: "We are as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again."

We know, however, that the custom of rock-sepulture was in use among the Persians for their most distinguished dead.

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE TOMB OF CYRUS.—EZEKIEL XXXII. 24–32.

HAVING in a former portion of this Volume given much attention to the history of Cyrus, in its connection with sacred prophecy, we cannot neglect the opportunity which is afforded by the mention of Persian sepulchres, of following the hero to his last earthly home.

It is clear that, whatever were the ordinary modes of sepulture among the Persians, their princes, and (at least in the provinces of the empire) the high satraps or grandees, had sepulchres hewn in the rock. The "sepulchres on high," of which the Scripture speaks, were especially affected by them. Those of the better sort are found to have been placed so high up on the face of the perpendicular cliffs as to be inaccessible, without such exertion, hazard, and contrivance, as few are able or willing to exercise. Such tombs had the twofold advantage of being safer from desecration, and of exhibiting to more advantage their sculptured fronts. The Mountain of Sepulchres at Nakhsh-i-Rustam offers the most remarkable example of this practice. Here are many tombs, perhaps forming collectively, the royal sepulchres. They are excavated in an almost perpendicular cliff, about 300 yards high. They are in two rows, of which the highest are four tombs, evidently of high antiquity; while those below are of inferior workmanship and later date. The four are alike, each presenting highly sculptured fronts, and each crowned with a representation of that act of Sabean worship which has been copied in p. 125 of the present volume. Sir Robert Ker Porter obtained access to one of them by being hauled up with a rope by some active natives, who had contrived to clamber up to the ledge in front of the tomb. He found the sepulchral chamber to be thirty-four feet long and nine feet high; but it had long been despoiled of its contents. This tomb, which is in better preservation than the others, has the front charged with inscriptions, copies of which have lately been secured by the antiquarian zeal of Mr. Tasker

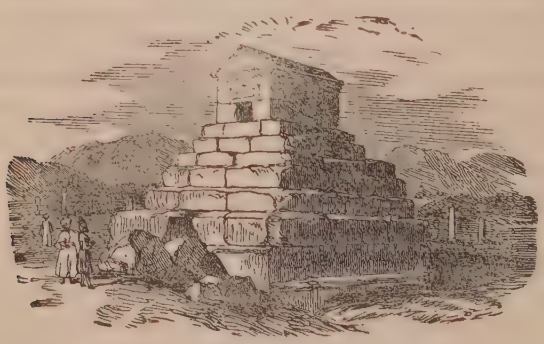
who died of a fever brought on by the toil and exposure he encountered in taking copies of the legends, while hanging by a rope from the summit of the rock. The decipherment of these inscriptions by Colonel Rawlinson has confirmed the conjecture of Porter, that *this* is the tomb which Darius Hystaspis caused to be made for himself in his lifetime.

The tomb of Cyrus was of a different and more distinguished character. It was not excavated in the rock, but built solidly as a rock. A description of it is furnished by Arrian, from the account of an eye-witness, one Aristobulus:—"The tomb of Cyrus was in the royal paradise at Pasargada, having around it a grove of various trees with abundance of water, and rich grass in the meadow. The tomb was below of a quadrangular shape, built of freestone. On this was a house of stone, with a roof. The door that leads into it is so narrow that a man of average height can with difficulty get in. Inside was a golden sarcophagus, in which the body of Cyrus was laid. Near it was a couch with golden feet; and the coverings were Babylonian carpets, and costly cloths of various colors, the manufacture of Babylon and Media. There were also chains, cimeters, and ornaments of gold and precious stones. Close by was a small house for the magi, to whom, since the time of Cambyses (the son of Cyrus), the care of the tomb had been entrusted, and had so continued from fathers to sons. On the tomb was engraved in Persian, an inscription to the effect, 'O man, I am Cyrus, who gave the empire to the Persians, and was lord of all Asia; therefore, grudge me not my sepulchre.'"

Some things in this description have been ill understood by translators and explainers; but it seems to us perfectly intelligible, from what we have seen of the interior of the sepulchres of royal persons and saints in modern Persia, and indeed in Turkey. These are arranged and furnished much in the style here described. In the centre of the chamber stands a kind of sarcophagus of an oblong figure, and generally higher than a man, greatly resembling in shape the hut-like upper portion of the monument of Cyrus, as shown in the engraving.

This is usually of some valuable wood; and the sides are hung round with rich cloths, usually velvet, laced with gold or silver;—the roof being left uncovered, and the inscription running along the ledge, between the roof and the perpendicular sides. This seems to give a correct idea of what is meant by the description, except that the sarcophagus was of gold; so that the precious metal, of which the whole was composed, shone in the uncovered roof above the rich hangings which enveloped the sides. Either to this kind of sarcophagus, or to the couch which is said to have been placed beside it in the tomb of Cyrus, the prophet's expression, "a bed in the midst of the slain," may very well be supposed to refer. Among the Turks, these constructions are usually lower, and rounded at top; and the costly coverings are laid over the whole, and the royal turban and cimeter are laid upon them. We have no doubt that the weapons, ornaments, etc., which are mentioned as in the tomb of Cyrus, were those which he had himself used.

When Alexander the Great visited this tomb, his officers greedily surveyed the rich spoil it offered; but the conqueror,



having had the inscription explained to him, forbade that aught of its contents should be touched. When, however, he returned from Bactria, he found the tomb despoiled of all its treasures; whereat he was so wroth, that he ordered the perpetrator to be put to death, although a Macedonian of high rank and influence.

The tomb still exists in the plains of Murghab, and has been described by different travellers. Its appearance is accurately given after Ker Porter, whose description is also the best. It stands in a wide area, marked outwardly by the broken shafts of twenty-four circular columns, which surround the building in the form of a square. The base on which the tomb stands is composed of immense blocks of white marble. A succession of gigantic steps completes, in a pyramidal form, the pedestal of this truly royal tomb,—majestic both in its simplicity and its vastness. The lowest range of the foundation is 43 feet by 37; and the edifice itself, which crowns the summit, diminishes to 21 feet by 16 feet 5 inches. It is covered with a shelving roof, built of the same massive stone as its base and sides, which are all fixed together by clamps of iron. The key of the tomb is in the charge of women, and ostensibly females only are admitted to the interior; but Porter found means of prevailing upon the two old guardians of the great king's tomb to admit him. The tomb is quite empty. The walls were found to be a solid mass of stone, five feet thick; and the chamber ten feet long, seven feet wide, and eight feet in height. The whole interior surface is of polished marble, much blackened by time, and broken away in many parts, as if by violence. There is no inscription in the ancient cuneiform character, which confirms our impression that it was on the sarcophagus itself. The identity of the tomb, however, has been established beyond all reasonable doubt, by the discovery of an inscription upon a pillar hard by, consisting of four words, repeated in three different species of the wedge-like writing. This the learned Orientalist Lassen has rendered into Roman equivalents thus: *Adam Qurus Kshâjathija Hakhâmanisija;* and translates it, "I am Cyrus, the king, the Achæmenian." This inscription, so beautiful in its simplicity, and so indicative, by its want of Oriental inflation, of the character of the man, is doubtless the original of the inscription which the Greek narrators amplified as above. It is indeed curious that Onesicratus, and Aristus of Salamis, have preserved a Greek hexameter which, it is pretended, was

engraved by the side of the Persian legend, and which is almost as simple as the original: "Here I Cyrus, king of kings, rest."

The remaining allusions (Ezek. xxxii. 26) are to the sepulchral rites of "Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude," who are described as going down to the grave "with their weapons of war," and "their swords under their heads." This is singularly appropriate to the nations supposed to be indicated,—those lying between and to the north of the Euxine and Caspian Seas. And that their "iniquities shall be upon their bones," may very well be supposed to refer to the vast heaps of earth, answering to the ancient British barrows, which that people piled over the corpses of their deceased kings and chiefs, who were deposited in them with all their ornaments and weapons of war. In the region supposed to be indicated, we have observed great numbers of such mounds or artificial hills, generally in the form of a broad cone, more or less obtuse,—that is, rounded at top; and distinguishable only from natural hills by the uniformity of their shapes, being generally overgrown with fine herbage, and sometimes garnished with trees and bushes. They are seen in the open steppes, where no natural hills occur; and also in the beautiful enclosed plains of the Caucasian region, bordered by a belt of natural mountains. Their isolation in such enclosed plains gives them their distinctive character; and the view always impressed us with the idea, that we witnessed in these mounds, so situated, the grandest cemetery the mind of man had ever devised.

The Zidonian or Phœnician sepulchres are alluded to, but not very distinctively, perhaps because they differed but little from those of the Jews. In the country by the coast, there are found various sepulchral chambers, with very elegant sarcophagi or chests of stone, with movable covers, which have generally been cast off and broken, probably in the search for treasure. These sarcophagi were no doubt intended for, or may have been removed from, the sepulchral chambers below, in the sides of which there are narrow cells, wide enough to admit

one of these stone coffins, and long enough to contain two or three of them. They are found to the north of Zidon, in the way between that place and Beirut.*

TWENTY-THIRD WEEK—SATURDAY.

DANIEL.—DAN. I.

In the third year of his reign, king Jehoiachin was besieged in Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; and, being constrained to submit, he was, by order of Nebuchadnezzar, laden with chains, with the purpose of sending him away to Babylon. But the conqueror afterwards relented, and restored to him his crown. Many persons of high family, and some even of the royal blood, were, however, sent away to Babylon, together with a portion of the treasures and sacred vessels of the Temple. This was, in fact, the *first* Babylonish captivity, and was about seven years prior to that in which the same king, with the prophet Ezekiel, was carried into exile. This was the first-fruits of that vintage which left the vine of Israel bare. That which was taken was what, in men or in substance, seemed most precious. The captives were, no doubt, selected partly to be living monuments in Babylon of the triumphs which its king had won, and of the punishment he had inflicted; and partly as hostages for the fidelity of the families to which they belonged, and, through the influence of those families, of the nation at large.

Among these captives was Daniel—a man destined, in the providence of God, to take a prominent part in the affairs of Babylon, and thereby to acquire an influence which enabled him to be of much service to the Jews in their state of exile. He was quite a youth when sent into captivity, but he rose early to distinction, and lived to see the ending of that seventy years of exile which he had been one of the first to taste.

He had been carefully brought up; and young as he was, his heart was imbued with that reverence for the law, with

* See Illustration in Evening Series: Fourth Week—Thursday.

those high principles, and with that deep sense of his duty to God, which carried him not safely only, but victoriously through the temptations of a luxurious court, and the perils of high station.

On the arrival of the exiles at Babylon, the comeliest, and cleverest of the youths were set apart, with a view to their receiving such education and training in the palace, under the chief of the eunuchs, in the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans, as might qualify them for future employment in the service of the court or the state. It is curious to find thus early a practice which, until within these few years, might still be seen in active and well-organized operation at the Ottoman Porte. The parallel is indeed so exact, that there is not a single point which might not receive illustration from that source. The time is still within living memory, when the pages of the seraglio, the officers of the court, as well as the greater part of the high functionaries of state and governors of provinces, were originally boys of Christian parentage, who had been taken captive in war, or bought or stolen in time of peace. The finest and most capable of these were sent to the palace, and placed under the charge of the chief of the white eunuchs. These lads were brought up in the religion of their masters; and in a school within the palace they received such complete instruction in Turkish learning and science as it was the lot of few others to obtain. Much pains were taken to teach them to speak the Turkish language (to them a foreign one) with the greatest purity, as spoken at court. They were clad neatly, and well but temperately dieted. They slept in large dormitories, where there were long rows of beds. Each had a separate couch, and between every third or fourth bed lay a white eunuch, who kept a watchful eye upon the conduct of the lads near him, and reported his observations to his chief.

When they had reached a proper age, the lads were instructed in military exercises, and it was an aim to render them active, brave, and laborious. Every one was also, according to the custom of the country, taught some handicraft employment, to serve him as a resource in any time of need.

Their education being completed, those who had shown most capacity were employed about the person of the sovereign, and the rest were assigned to the various offices of the extensive establishment to which they belonged. In due time these able or successful youths got advanced to high court offices, which gave them immediate access to the royal person—an advantage which soon paved the way to their going out on military commands, or to take the government of provinces. It has not rarely happened, that favored court officers have at once stepped into the highest offices of the state, without having been previously abroad in the world as pashas or military commanders.

Now, if the reader examines the chapter before him, he will perceive how much this agrees with the usage of the ancient Babylonian court.

Daniel was one of the Jewish youths chosen to be thus taken into the royal palace of Babylon. Three others are named on account of what subsequently happened to them, and because they were friends of Daniel, and shared his principles and views. These were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. It was, however, the custom to give Chaldean names to the foreign youths thus admitted to the palace, and thus Daniel acquired the sonorous but heathenish name of Belteshazzar, while the others became Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The very same was done by the Turks to the youths of whom we have just spoken—their original names having been speedily exchanged for such as the Turkish Moslems delight in. Names are almost always changed with a change of religion, but as nothing of the kind took place in the case before us, we must regard it as sufficiently explained by the general practice of changing the native names of foreign slaves—a practice which is as well illustrated by the existing usage in regard to the names of negro slaves, as by any other example that might be adduced. We have an instance similar to the present in the case of Joseph, showing that the practice was also Egyptian, and extremely ancient. It seems uncertain whether the Babylonians had any particular ideas as to the names they

gave in such cases. As in the case of those taken into the palace with a view to the public service, it must have been desired to obliterate the most conspicuous mark of foreign origin, the names were probably (as among the Turks) such as were in use among themselves. No such names, indeed, occur among those of native Babylonians that we possess, but these are too few to supply any evidence. That of Daniel himself, indeed—Belteshazzar—resembles that of a subsequent king of Babylon. But it is a syllable longer; and from the meaning of these names, as well as from their fulness of sound, they have no marks of that triviality by which it is now more usually sought to mark the servile condition. The Athenians, in particular, are reported to have been very careful that the names they gave to their slaves should not be names accounted dignified or respectable. They commonly gave them short names, seldom of more than two syllables,—probably that they might be the more easily and quickly pronounced, when those to whom they belonged were called by their masters. In modern practice, however, it is curious that in the American slave states such "respectable and dignified" names as Cæsar, Pompey, etc., are given to slaves, and become, in the estimation of the general American public, so debased by that servile use, that although they ransack not only sacred, but Greek and Roman history, for distinctive and unusual Christian names, they carefully avoid those which they have thus appropriated to slaves. *We* give the same names to our dogs,—in both ways an indignity being inflicted upon illustrious names, little contemplated by those who made those names immortal.

Twenty-Fourth Week—Sunday.

THE LEARNER'S AID.—DANIEL I. 20.

God is a good paymaster. Give what we may to Him of faith, or work, or trust, or love, or zeal, He gives back again with large interest,—good measure, and pressed down, and

shaken together, and running over,—ten, twenty, thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold, in whatever we need most from Him.

The history of Daniel strikingly proves this; and it may be clearly seen even in that early portion of his history with which we are now engaged.

He entered the palace of the proud heathen king, into whose hand Judah had been given for her faithlessness, with full purpose of heart to preserve his integrity, and to keep his soul undefiled from the various temptations which, in such a place, there was much to fear would assail him. With such a purpose before him,—in carrying which out he might reckon upon treatment hard for the young to bear, not only from the officers of the palace, but from his own less scrupulous and less pious companions—the sneers, the shrugs, the taunts, which fall so keenly upon the raw sensitiveness of the youthful spirit, —the thing most essential to smooth his path was the favor and kindness of the chief of the eunuchs. And this he gained immediately.—And how? God gave it to him. See with what emphasis and force of expression this is intimated:— "God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs." Not only *favor*, but *tender love*,— such love as that with which a father regards his son. Daniel knew that to please God was the best way to please Ashpenaz; not that Ashpenaz cared about Daniel's pleasing God, but because God, being pleased with his purposes and desires to be true to Him, could, if it were needful, incline the heart of Ashpenaz favorably towards him. Daniel was a diligent and thoughtful student of the holy books; and he had no doubt read and pondered over the text, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will."—(Prov. xxi. 1.) The whole career of Daniel evinces his deep conviction of this truth. He knew also another truth, although it had not then been written, "Who is there that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

The "tender love" of Ashpenaz, which the Lord had thus bestowed upon his servant, was a very important acquisition.

None could dare to treat harshly, few would venture even to flout at, one who stood so well with that formidable personage.

But more than this was needed. Daniel was in a school,—he was under a course of instruction, on his proficiency in which his future course of life, his honor, his station, and his usefulness, were made to depend. No favor of the chief eunuch could carry him creditably through the laborious and exacting studies required, or bring him victoriously through that severe trial to which his attainments would in the end be subjected, along with many able competitors, and in the presence of the princes and sages of the realm.

To learn the language of the Chaldeans, closely related as it was to the Hebrew, could have been no difficult task to a youth of his abilities; but to acquire proficiency in the unfamiliar learning and science for which the Babylonians were distinguished, was a sterner task. For a foreigner to acquit himself creditably in these studies, needed that he should

"Scorn delights, and live laborious days;"

but that he should acquire positive distinction, and eclipse even the natives in their own line of study, required, the world would say, rare genius—shining and peculiar parts. Daniel and his friends knew that it required something more. They knew what was wanted, and they knew where to seek it. They needed aid from God, and He gave it freely to them. "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom." By this means, still more than by the patronage of Ashpenaz, they were enabled to command the respect of their fellow-students; and when the time of trial came, envy was crushed, and detraction silenced, by the signal and glorious success of these four youths, who had trusted in God; for then, "in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."

There seems to us something full of overlooked instruction in this. We count it reasonable to look to the Lord for our daily bread,—to apply to Him for aid and guidance in the trials and emergencies of life. But how few are they who seek for the same aid from Him, and feel the same dependence upon Him, in matters of the intellect—in learning, in study, in thought! But why not? Is the nourishing and strengthening of the mind of less importance than that of the body? Are mental labors, trials, and achievements of less consequence, or of less enduring effects upon ourselves and others, than those of the body, or than the movements of outward conduct? The reverse is the truth. Then, has God limited himself to one class of operations for our benefit; and is not rather his high encouragement and aid equally ready for all, and preferably ready for the most important? It is very reasonable and becoming—it is very necessary—that when we go forth into the toil and business of the day, or when our affairs present perplexing difficulties, we should cast ourselves upon the Lord's protection, and look to Him for counsel and guidance. But is it—can it be—less needful, that when we sit down to read, to write, to study, to think, we should lift up our hearts trustingly to Him, and cry—

"What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support?"

God can and will do this for us; and it would please him well to be asked to do it. Let us believe that to pray earnestly, is to study well; and let us be sure that He will refuse nothing that we seek, in singleness of heart, only for his service and his glory. How many difficulties that seem insuperable would be smoothed,—how many blessed thoughts might be suggested,—how many forgotten things brought to mind,—how many wearinesses refreshed,—if we trusted more to God, and less to ourselves, in the exercise of such gifts as He may have committed to us, and in the supply of such as we want. Take the instance of the acquisition of a language. What a weariness it is to many,—how bewildering are often the difficulties,

—how exhausting the tax upon the memory and judgment,—and how often are not some tempted to lean hopelessly over the grammar and lexicon in sheer despair! Is there no help? Yes, there is prayer. Languages are now needful in sundry departments of God's service; and is it to be believed that He who once bestowed the gift of tongues miraculously, to fit his servants for their work, has altogether ceased his aid? Let him who has to supply by the labor of years the absence of that gift, believe that it is still in a great measure open to his earnest prayer; and that the Lord, whom he means to serve, is as able as He is willing to impart all the endowments that may be needful,—not to supersede his labor, but to make his labor easy, and his burden light.

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK—MONDAY.

CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES.—DANIEL I. 8–15.

DANIEL and his friends were but four out of many who entered the imperial palace of proud Babylon under the circumstances lately described. But they alone found their tender consciences harassed by a scruple respecting food which met them at the outset. The youths thus introduced to the palace were provided for from the royal kitchen, on a dietary defined by certain rules ordered or approved by the king. Now there were several grounds on which a conscientious Jew might regard himself polluted by partaking of food so provided. In the first place, the dietary might, and probably did, comprise articles of food,—such as the flesh of swine, hares, etc., which the law interdicted to the Israelites. Or even if of lawful kinds, the law required the animals to be very perfectly cleared of blood: to which end the Jews killed their meat in a peculiar manner, and accounted it unlawful to eat of any that they did not know to have been in this way slaughtered.* And, yet

* This matter has been more fully explained in Morning Series: Thirty-second Week—Tuesday.

further, it was customary among most ancient nations to make an oblation to their gods of some part of what they ate or drank, as a thankful acknowledgment that the good things they enjoyed were their gift. This stood, then, with them in the place which our grace before meat occupies; but it was of the nature of a sacrifice—a thank-offering to those that were no gods, ascribing to them the honor due only to the one Lord of heaven and earth. Yet, more, the heathen—as indeed did the Jews—used for food animals that had actually been offered in sacrifice at the altar of their gods; and in eating meat presented to him by the heathen, a Jew could feel no certainty that he might not be partaking of that which had been offered to idols, and this would have been an abomination to him. It was clear, therefore, that there were grounds on which a conscientious Jew might well hesitate to partake of food thus provided.

Such was the case of the four Hebrew youths. It might have seemed to ordinary minds difficult to mark out the right course of action,—or indeed to take any course, at the risk of exciting displeasure by what might be regarded as an offensive display of the specialities of Judaism; and it must be unpleasant and ungracious to apprize those under whose protection circumstances have placed you, and whose favorable opinion of you may have much influence upon your future lot,—that the food they provide for you, and which is such as they use themselves, is such as you cannot eat—is such as would defile you. It has the air of exclusiveness and self-righteous arrogance, which it would be painful to seem to manifest towards those entitled to consideration and respect. Consider a little. Suppose that a young Hindu of high caste were entrusted to your care; and suppose that, when you pressed upon him the abundance of your table, he should tell you plainly that all this was an abomination to him, would defile and ruin him; and should forthwith go and dress for himself a little rice in the open air in your court-yard. Just what you would be likely to feel in that case, at having your good cheer despised and counted abominable, is what the Babylonian officers would

be likely to feel on becoming acquainted with the scruples of the young Hebrews.

It was altogether a difficult matter, especially to persons so young, and therefore so sensitive to anything like scorn or derision. In such a case, most persons would dislike to move in the matter at all, where it was so much their interest to please; or would seek to effect their exemption by some evasion or circuitous process, in order to extenuate the offensiveness of such an intimation. In fact, we see that most of these youths either troubled themselves not about the matter, or shrunk from the odious difficulties of the task.

But to Daniel, who took the lead in this matter, God had given more grace. He saw the necessity of action; and then he saw that the strictest, plainest, and boldest mode of action was the safest and the best. He went at once to head-quarters, —being to no less a personage than the chief of the eunuchs, Ashpenaz, on whom his beaming intelligence had already made a favorable impression. The manner in which this high functionary received the application, that these four youths might be allowed not "to defile themselves with the king's meat," is very observable. It was both kind and cautious. Between what it expressed and what it was understood to imply, it amounted to this: he would willingly grant the request; but he was afraid to do so. The king had appointed this diet; and if, through their dispensing with this generous fare, they lost their good looks, inquiry would be made; and if the fact of his concurrence transpired, his head would be in great peril. He probably feared that it might lay his integrity under the suspicion of supplying the youths under his charge with inferior diet, in order that he might make a profit out of the difference. Daniel clearly understood that, although this great person declined to incur the responsibility of giving his own sanction, he would wink at any arrangement they might make with any subordinate officer who might be willing to take the risk, and whose head was of less value than his own. So understanding him, Daniel next applied to Melzar, the eunuch in whose immediate charge he and his friends were placed,—

by which it appears that, as in the Turkish seraglio, there was one eunuch for every three or four of these lads. Aware also now where the risk lay, Daniel shaped his application accordingly. He requested that they might be allowed to feed on pulse and water for ten days; and that if they then looked nothing the worse, they should be permitted to continue this sober fare. Melzar consented—perhaps not uninfluenced by the benefit which accrued to himself from this arrangement. They had the good sense to propose, not the comparatively luxurious fare which might be still open to them as Jews, but that which was most simple, inexpensive, and easily prepared, —such, perhaps, as they had observed to be already largely provided for the inferior servants of the palace.

The result was triumphant. When Melzar examined them at the end of the ten days, he saw that not only had they lost none of their former comeliness, but that "their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than those of the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." There are reasons in nature why this simple diet should be more favorable to health and beauty than the dainties from which they abstained. Chardin remarks: "I have observed that the countenances of the Kechichs are in fact more rosy and smooth than those of others; and that the people who fast much—as the Armenians and the Greeks—are, notwithstanding, very beautiful, sparkling with health, and with a clean and lively countenance." We cannot fail to see, however, that the Lord bestowed his blessing upon their sincere and faithful purpose, and secured their design from failure; for it is not only stated that they were more handsome than the other lads, but that they had become more comely than they themselves had been before.

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

THE EXAMINATION.—DANIEL I. 19, 20.

It is stated, that when the time for the training and probation of the young Hebrews had passed, "*the king communed* with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." From this an old commentator* deduces the doctrine, "that learning is necessary in kings;" assuming that Nebuchadnezzar examined them himself, from his own resources, and that, consequently, he was a man of learning. He says: "Nebuchadnezzar beeing a great warrior and conqueror, yet was himself so well seene in the knowledge of the Chaldeans, who were held to be the most learned in the world, that he was able to sift and examine these 4 men, whom he found in wisdome to goe beyond all his wisemen and soothsayers in Babylon. Such learned princes, among the people of God, were David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josias; among the heathen, Alexander the Great, Scipio Africanus, Julius Cæsar, with others; and among the Christian emperors, Constantine the Great, who decided the controversies and questions among the Christian bishops. And this famous kingdome of England hath had most learned princes: Henerie the 8, Edward the 6, Queen Elizabeth of late blessed memorie, and our now soveraigne king James, who is able to conferre with any man in his faculty, as here Nebuchadnezzar doth with Daniel and the other three."

Now, without any disrespect to Nebuchadnezzar's learning, we apprehend that the commentator has mistaken the character of the transaction. The probability is, that a high court of learning was held, at which the king presided, and at which the nobles and sages of the land "assisted." The presence of the latter is, indeed, implied in the fact, that the king found the four Hebrew youths "ten times better" than his magicians and astrologers. How could he know that, but by actual op-

* WILLET: *Hexapla in Danielem.* London, 1610.

portunities of comparison, which such a meeting afforded? The sages probably proposed difficult questions, which the youths readily answered; and were in turn allowed to put questions, which the sages could not answer. We suppose, also, that the youths were expected or allowed to propose and defend certain theses against each other. In our own examinations of students, the object is chiefly to ascertain *what* they have learned. Oriental examination applied less to this, than to ascertain how far that which had been learned had improved and quickened the capacity, so as to create a certain alertness of judgment and readiness of resource in enabling them to answer, off-hand, difficult and puzzling questions, having little direct connection with their studies, but which it was assumed that the general bent of their education ought to enable them to solve.

In the first of the Apocryphal books of Esdras,* there is a curious story about a contest of theses between three Hebrew youths, in the palace of Darius king of Persia.

The king had held a great feast to his princes and governors, and also to his household. Stimulated by the occasion, and emulous of honor, the three youths, who were of the king's body-guard, proposed among themselves that each should write a sentence, and deposit it sealed under the king's pillow, and that he whose sentence should be declared, "by the king and the three princes of Persia," to be the wisest, should receive from the royal hand "great gifts and great things, in token of victory." The coolness with which they proceed to assign the reward without consulting the king, who was to bestow it, is very entertaining. The writer was "to be clothed in purple, to drink in gold, and to sleep upon gold, and a chariot with bridles of gold, and a head-tire of fine linen, and a chain about his neck; and shall sit next to Darius because of his wisdom, and shall be called Darius his cousin."

* This book is of unknown date, but is largely quoted by Josephus, and therefore existed before his time. The story we cite may be a fiction, but it is, at all events, founded on a knowledge of Eastern customs in this respect, and may, therefore, be quoted for illustration as one might quote an historian or traveller.

When the papers were found, the king made even more of the matter than the ambitious youths expected.—He summoned a high court of audience, and, being seated on his throne, called for the young men to vindicate their theses.

One had written, "*Wine is the strongest;*" and in supporting it he argued chiefly from the fact, that it brought down the strength of man, "causing all men to err that drank it." It is a graphic picture of the various modes and changes of mind which wine produces.

The second had written, "The king is the strongest"—probably calculating that the courtliness of his proposition would make up for deficiency of argument. There is nothing very remarkable in what he said, except as to the truth of the picture given of a despotic government. "And yet he is but one man," whom all thus obey, even to destruction and to death.

The third had somewhat unfairly fortified himself by *two* propositions: "Women are strongest; but above all things, Truth beareth away the victory." He spoke largely on both themes, and with a degree of boldness and freedom which may astonish those who are unacquainted with the *oral* license allowed in Eastern courts. As to women he first proved very satisfactorily, that if men rule everything else, women rule men, and are therefore virtually the stronger. Besides, all men's labors have home, and the woman reigning there, for their final object. For her he labors, fights, robs, spoils, and even sins,—"yea, many there be that have run out of their wits for women, and become servants for their sakes. Many also have perished, have erred, and sinned for women." He then ventured upon a hazardous illustration: There, before them, was the greatest of all the kings, whose strength had been so much extolled—he before whom the nations crouched in fear. Yet he, the orator, had seen a woman make a mere plaything of this mighty monarch. He had seen him sitting with his secondary wife, Apame, "daughter of the admirable Bartacus," on his right hand; and she had actually taken the crown off his head and put it on her own, and had even dared to smite his dreadful person with her left hand. And all the while the king "gaped

and gazed upon her with open mouth: if she laughed upon him, he laughed also; but if she took any displeasure at him, the king was fain to flatter, that she might be reconciled to him again."

How the king might relish this illustration of the strength of woman from his own weakness, the speaker did not allow him time to consider; for he at once struck up a higher and bolder strain in praise of Truth. "Wine is wicked," he said; "*the king is wicked;* women are wicked; all the children of men are wicked. There is no truth in them, and in their unrighteousness they shall perish; but as for Truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore." And he closed with, "Blessed be the God of truth!"

He ceased: and, moved by the eloquent truths he had uttered, every tongue in that high audience found a voice, and cried, "Great is Truth, and mighty above all things!"

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

THE LOST DREAM.—DANIEL II.

It is not unusual to have a dream of great significance and interest, but which yet passes from the mind when we awake. We remember how deeply it interested us,—how nearly it seemed to concern us; but our utmost efforts are vainly exerted to retain the circumstances, so effectually do they elude our grasp.

One night the great king, Nebuchadnezzar, had such a dream. He awoke in a state of alarm, horror, and dismay, as one to whom something most solemn and threatening had happened; but he vainly strove to recover the circumstances which had left upon his mind an impression so deep.

To us there would be no resource in such a case; but the king of Babylon had one, which, as he judged, ought in such a case to be effectual. His court was crowded with men of learning and science, which science embraced the pretension to

a curious variety of occult knowledge, by which the adepts claimed to be able to uncover the secret things that were hidden from eyes less learned. No ancient people were so much devoted as the Babylonians to the sciences; and in this, the testimony of history entirely agrees with that of the sacred books. From both sources, we learn that there were several classes of these persons, who devoted themselves to the different branches of learning and curious arts; for in the ancient East, and, indeed, in the modern East—what was really known of science was always connected with some kind of charlatanry or other;—that is to say, the learned were not content with the credit of what they did know, but connected with it the pretension to some occult and peculiar knowledge beyond. Thus astronomy, which owes much to the Chaldeans, and of which they have indeed the credit of being the inventors, was intimately connected with astrology; so that, in fact, the two formed but one science, of which the latter branch was deemed by far the most important, and to which the real science was little more than the handmaid. This is still the case in the East, and was so formerly with us. In the original record of the trial and conviction of Thomas Burdett, John Stacy, and Thomas Blake, in 1477, for constructive treason, the accusation is, that they imagined and compassed the death of the king and prince by calculating their nativities, "to know when they should die;" and thus, "in order to carry their traitorous intention into effect, worked and calculated, by art, magic, necromancy, *and astronomy*, the death and final destruction of the king and prince." *

In our text, the four classes of Babylonian adepts are described as "the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans." They professed to be able, by the different arts of their respective orders, to interpret dreams and prodigies, and to foretell things to come. Of these four orders, the first is supposed by some, and the last by others, to have been the magi, in whom the occult science was connected with the priestly character. This is the only one of these orders

* *Athenæum*, May 15, 1852.

which can be recognized in the Assyrian sculptures, from the peculiar dress of the functionary, and from the distinctive offices in which he is seen to be engaged, which shows that he was certainly a priest, and therefore a magician or a diviner of one

of the classes mentioned here; for it is known that, as in other countries, and eminently in this, the priests were also diviners. The priestly diviner, as represented in the sculptures, wears a peculiar dress, which, as it is only otherwise represented upon the persons of gods and deified persons, may be regarded as sacerdotal. The garb is rich and picturesque, and comprehends a jewelled headband and bracelets. This personage is usually represented with a gazelle upon his left arm, and a flower in his right hand; but the former is sometimes wanting. Taken altogether, the figure may give the reader a good idea of the class of persons so often mentioned in Daniel.

The king having at his disposal the services of so many sorts of learned persons, who professed that nothing was hidden from their various arts, did not see reason to despair of recovering his lost dream. He sent for them, and required them to tell him

his own dream, and then to interpret it to him. At this they were confounded; and they informed the king that they were quite ready to interpret any dream related to them, but to tell a dream which the dreamer had himself forgotten, passed their power. The tyrant was wroth at this, and declared, that if they did not, they should be cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill. Of the former punishment we have spoken lately. It was known among the Jews; for "Samuel hewed Agag in pieces." But the latter, rendering the very abode of the culprit a memorial of abomination, occurs only in Babylonian and Persian decrees.*

On hearing this, the unhappy enchanters declared, with some heat, that there was no man upon the earth who could meet this requirement nor was there ever any king that taxed to this extent the skill of his diviners. The king's reply shows that he began to doubt their pretended skill altogether, seeing that they avowed their incompetency in a matter by which that skill would be really tested. He remarked astutely, that if they told him the dream, he should then have proof that they were able to furnish the interpretation. Now there is much good sense in this, although we may be at the first view disposed to take part with the diviners, and to consider that they were harshly dealt with. But Nebuchadnezzar justly considered their telling him the dream itself, was such a test of their competency to furnish the interpretation afterwards, as it was not unreasonable, on their own principles, to require of them; because the same divine power which could communicate to

* See the other instances in Ezra vi. 11; Dan. iii. 29. This custom, to the extent of destroying the house of the offender, also existed at Athens, in which city many spots, according to Xenophon, remained vacant, where the habitation had either been destroyed by fire, or erased by a decree of the people. "No sooner was a citizen accused of high treason, or some such crime, than immediately his house was demolished, as a vessel is broken that has contained poisonous liquor. Neither was it lawful to rebuild there; for the very ground was supposed to become fatal and execrable, from the crimes of its former possessors."—De Pauw, *Philosophical Dissertation on the Greeks*, i. 40.

them the interpretation, as they professed, could also communicate to them the dream itself.

The diviners, however, could only, in their despair, exclaim that none could declare what the king required, "except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

Daniel, although not present, was of the same opinion. He, after his examination, had been advanced into the order of learned men; and when the king decreed a general slaughter of that order, as he did in his wrath, the four Hebrew youths were about to share that doom, when Daniel, confident that the Lord he served could impart this secret to him, implored a respite in the execution of this sentence. This was granted. Then they gave themselves unto prayer; and God heard them, and revealed the whole matter to Daniel in a night-vision. Indeed, as it was clearly meant by Him who gave the king his dream, that it should be interpreted to him, it cannot be questioned that the honor of the interpretation was reserved for Daniel, in order that he might be advanced to such a position, as would enable him to protect and aid his exiled brethren, and that respect might be secured for the God they served.

And here observe, that Daniel never attempts to make his life more pleasant, by suppressing the fact that he abhorred idolatry, and that the God he served was the only real and true God. On the contrary he boldly and faithfully avows it on all occasions, in season and (as some would judge) out of season; and there is nothing of which he manifests anxiety so sustained and constant, as that the Lord shall have all the honor of all the great things He enables his servant to accomplish. So, when the king asks him if he is able to make known the dream and its interpretation, he reminds him that there had been no power in the gods the diviners served to enable them to do this; "but *there is* a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." And throughout, he ascribes everything to this God, whom he served,—the dream itself,—the interpretation,—the existence and power of the Babylonian empire, in the person of the king before him,—and all the his-

torical developments which the vision prefigured. This he succeeded in impressing with such force upon the king's mind, as at the close drew from him the memorable declaration: "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings."

Considering that this God was, in the king's view, one of the many gods of nations he had conquered, this was much to bring his proud mind to, though it fell far short of the truth, that He was the *only* God, and that beside Him there was no god. But we have no evidence that this admission, wrung from him by the irresistible force of present conviction, made any abiding impression upon his mind or conduct. The lesson he had to learn was, therefore, to be more severely taught.

Meanwhile, however, Daniel was promoted to great and distinguished honors. Not only did he receive "great gifts;" not only was he promoted to the high office of Rab-mag, which made him chief of the learned order to which he belonged; but, to give him the strength in sustaining it, which, as a foreigner of adverse religion, he so much needed, the civil government of the metropolitan province of Babylon was committed to him. Thus Daniel became, so to speak, both Lord Chancellor and Minister of the Home Department; and the union of both offices in one person probably gave him a degree of power and influence in the state, not inferior to that of the viziers and prime ministers of modern times.

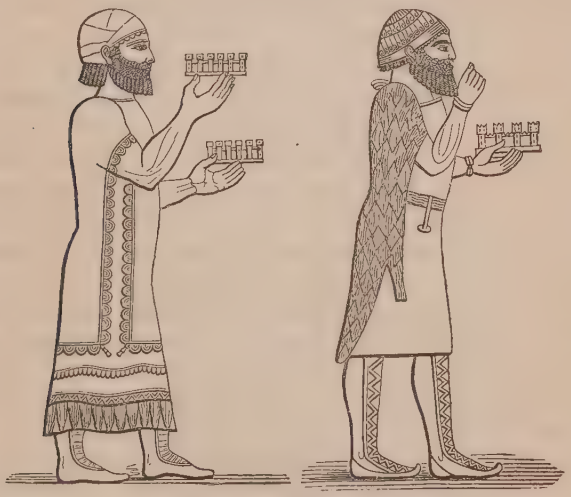
Daniel did not forget his friends in this his advancement. They were, at his request, promoted to high employments in the department over which he presided.

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE FIERY FURNACE.—DANIEL III.

King Nebuchadnezzar was what would be called a man of large ideas and vast undertakings. The great empire he had won and consolidated comprised many different nations, with

different gods and different forms of religious service. Seeing that all these nations obeyed him as a king, and were subject to his absolute sway, it seemed to him but reasonable that his god should share his triumph, and that, as there was but one civil, so there should be but one religious, obedience. He therefore determined to set up a vast golden image of his god in the plain of Dura, and that, at a signal given by bands of music, all the persons assembled together in the vast plain at the time of dedication, should fall down and worship this image. At the court of Babylon there were necessarily numbers of persons belonging to all nations subject to the king's sceptre; but, that the act might be complete, the governors of the dif-



ferent provinces of the empire were summoned to assist at the ceremony, to represent the nations and provinces, the government of which they administered.*

* These governors, answering to the satraps of the ancient Persian empire, and to the pashas of the modern Turkish empire, were mostly native princes of the provinces they governed, and therefore the more fit representatives of them on such an occasion. These provincial governors are represented in the Assyrian sculptures in the garbs of their

It must not be concealed, however, that there have been various interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's motives in setting up this image. It is, however, the general opinion, that the image itself was that of Bel or Belus: and in this case, seeing that this was already the god worshipped in Chaldea, there seems no adequate reason for the stringent and penal enforcement of this worship, but on the ground we have assigned. A penalty—and that of death—must be designed to constrain the worship of those who were not already votaries of the idol. For those who were, nothing of the kind could be needed. This view is now confirmed by the Assyrian inscriptions, to which we have already referred (p. 91), and which show that this people were very zealous in promoting the worship of Assarac among conquered nations.

The image was of gold—hardly of solid gold, but hollow, or of wood covered with gold. The great size renders this supposition necessary, besides that it was never the ancient custom to make any but small figures of solid gold. The image was no less than sixty cubits high, and six cubits broad—dimensions which must have rendered it visible to the most remote of the worshippers assembled in the great plain at the dedication. This vast size is not without parallel, and has even been exceeded. The Colossus of Rhodes was seventy cubits high, and the Colossus of Nero was not of inferior magnitude, being one hundred and ten feet high. These, however, were not of gold. It is observable that the height is out of all proportion to the breadth; and as the rules of proportion were usually observed in such cases, it is probable that the assigned height included that of the pedestal on which the image stood. A statue six cubits broad could not well be more than thirty-six cubits high, if the ordinary rules of proportion in the human figure were followed. It is worthy of note that this is not the only instance

different nations, and are easily distinguished by their bearing the model of a city as a symbol of their office. Some bear two such models, one in each hand, and these may be supposed to be governors of two adjacent provinces, or of one province containing two important cities.

we possess of gigantic idols of gold among the Babylonians. Herodotus writes, that in his time there was at Babylon an idol image of gold twelve cubits high; and, what is still more more remarkable, another authority, obviously speaking of the same statue, mentions that every stranger was obliged to worship it before he was allowed to enter the city.*

The penalty upon those who failed to fall down and worship the image the king had set up, was that they should be cast into "a burning fiery furnace." By this it would appear that death by burning alive was a very ancient punishment for "heresy." It is the earliest instance, except one, of the infliction of that punishment for any offence—and that instance also occurs among the Babylonians, showing that it was a customary punishment with them. Jeremiah, in denouncing the false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, predicted that they should be put to death by the king of Babylon: "And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The Lord maketh thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, *whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.*"†

To this punishment the three friends of Daniel were condemned, when Nebuchadnezzar was informed that they had disobeyed his mandate, and had not bent down in worship when the music sounded. Indeed, the king was so enraged at their faithful testimony, and their avowed belief that the God they served was able to deliver, and would deliver, them even from "the burning fiery furnace," that he caused the furnace to

* PHILOSTRATUS, *De Vita Apollon.*, ch. 19.

† Jer. xxix. 22. This custom, not long ago, still subsisted in that repository of ancient usages—Persia. Sir John Chardin, describing the punishments used in that country, says: "There is still a particular way of putting to death those who have transgressed in civil affairs—as by causing a dearth, or by selling above the prescribed rate, by means of a false weight, or who have committed themselves in any other way. The cooks are put upon a spit, and roasted before a slow fire. During the dearth of 1668, I saw ovens heated in the royal square of Ispahan to terrify the bakers, and to deter them from deriving advantage from the general distress." So that, in fact, cooks were cooked, and bakers baked, on such occasions.

be heated "seven times more than it was wont to be heated" —an intimation which alone shows that the punishment was not unfrequent, and that the furnace was that used for such executions. So fierce was the heat, that it actually destroyed the strong men employed to thrust the bound martyrs into the fire.

There was a dreadful pause, and every one looked with strained eyes, in the expectation that even a moment had sufficed to destroy every trace of the Hebrew youths in that sea of fire. The king looked—and, lo! he beheld them moving safely and unconcerned amid the flames, which had power only to burn their bonds, but not to singe their clothing, or to hurt a hair of their heads. And they were not alone. There was a fourth, whom the astonished king declared to be "like the son of God." This phrase has excited some curious questions. It is not likely that this heathen king could have had any notion of the Second Person in the Trinity; but he had notions of angels. It is probable that he meant that he saw one like a son of God, or of the gods (for the word is plural, as usual), meaning thereby an angel or celestial intelligence, such as we see depicted with wings in the Assyrian sculptures, and of which more than one representation has been given in this work. Indeed, he so explains it afterwards, when he glorifies God for having sent "his angel" to deliver his servants. We may presume that it was an angel, sent from heaven to comfort them in their fiery trial, and to work the more thorough conviction in the mind of the king. He was convinced, alarmed, remorseful. He went as near as he durst to the mouth of the furnace, and desired the young men to come forth. They came; and the nobles who crowded around had ample opportunity of witnessing that the fire had no power over the faithful servants of Jehovah. Not only were they entirely unhurt, and their clothes unsinged, but even "the smell of fire had not passed upon them."

This had all the effect intended upon the king's mind. He was convinced that the God of these Hebrews was one not to be trifled with, or safely offended: and his conviction assured to the Jews future protection in the exercise of their religion;

for it drew from him a decree that "every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill."

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE FALL OF PRIDE.—DANIEL IV.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR was beyond doubt one of the greatest and most illustrious princes that the world has ever seen; and the ages as they roll disclose new evidences, long hidden, of that eminence in power and magnificence which the Scripture ascribes to him. His misfortune was, that he was but too conscious of his own greatness; and when he looked down upon the nations lying at his feet, and cast his eyes abroad upon the magnificence he had created around him, his heart was lifted up in kingly pride; and ascribing all that he had achieved to the strength of his own arm, and to the largeness of his own conceptions, he began to deem himself something more than mortal,—wholly forgetting the Power by whom kings reign, and who had made him what he was, and had given him all he owned.

One day, as he "walked in the palace of his kingdom," and viewed the glories all around him, whereby he had rendered the great city in which he reigned the wonder of the earth—he exclaimed, in a burst of imperial pride: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" While the word was still in his mouth, expressing the thought of his heart, there fell a voice from heaven, pronouncing the terrible words: "The kingdom is departed from thee! and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou *know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and*

giveth it to whomsoever He will." That very hour this doom was fulfilled—that very hour in which Nebuchadnezzar had deemed himself almost a god, beheld him far less than man. The mind of a man fled from him, and the mind of a beast entered. He fancied himself a beast of the field, and as such he cast off the robes and refused the food and habitation of a man. He rushed forth into his park, and mingled with the beasts that fed there, living upon the herbs of the field, fleeing the face of man, and remaining exposed to the weather day and night, summer and winter, "unti. his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." No doubt he was constantly watched at a distance, and his safety duly protected, while his son Evil-merodach assumed the regency until his father should be restored to his right mind.

This did not occur until the time appointed—seven years—had passed; and then—it is the king himself who relates the facts in a proclamation published on his recovery—"At the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up my eyes unto heaven;" that first look to heaven—that mute appeal of the brute-man, was not in vain—"Mine understanding returned to me;" and what was the first impulse and use of his restored understanding? "I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored Him that liveth forever and ever." God's victory over the proudest of men was complete. He proceeded to confess that before Him, "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou." In this conviction he continued after, on perceiving the change that had taken place in him, his counsellors and his lords repaired to him, and brought him back to his palace and his kingdom; for he ends in extolling "the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: *and those that walk in pride, He is able to abase.*"

What had materially contributed in bringing the king to this frame of mind, was without doubt the fact, that in interpreting another dream for him, Daniel had foretold all this to

him a year before it occurred—had solemnly warned him of the approaching judgment, and had boldly and faithfully counselled him to seek to avert the doom not yet sealed, by repentance and righteousness. The warning was in vain; but it bore fruit after the threatened punishment had been inflicted.

We wish to add a few words respecting the nature of Nebuchadnezzar's claim, of which he so much vaunted, of being the builder of great Babylon. There was reason for it. He was not indeed the founder of the city—for it existed from very ancient times; but he improved it so greatly, adorned it with so many grand buildings, and rebuilt parts of it so magnificently, that he brought it to a very different condition to that in which he found it. Josephus, following Berosus, ascribes to Nebuchadnezzar the adorning of the temple of Bel with the spoils he had taken in war—the embellishments of the ancient city—the triple wall of burnt brick surrounding it—a new palace of extraordinary size and splendor—stone terraces, which had the appearance of mountains, planted with various kinds of trees, and the celebrated hanging gardens of similar construction, erected to gratify his Median consort, who was

desirous of having, in this dead level, some scenery resembling that of her native country. Of the old city before his time, there are no *ascertained* remains; nor, from the inferior materials of which it was formed, is it likely that such should be found. But not only Babylon, but the whole region, is full of his great name. This is quite a recent discovery, which we owe to Colonel Rawlinson.

It was a custom in Babylon, borrowed perhaps from the

Assyrians, that the brick used in building the ancient cities on the lower Tigris and Euphrates, should be stamped with the name and titles of the royal founder. This practice may eventually afford the key to important chronological disclosures; and Colonel Rawlinson expresses a hope that the bricks collected from different sites may enable him to reconstruct the chronology of the country. Now, the fact in point is, that *every ruin* in Babylon Proper, to some distance north of Bagdad, has its bricks stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar; and Colonel Rawlinson states that he has examined the bricks *in situ*, belonging perhaps to one hundred different towns, within this area of about one hundred miles in length, and thirty or forty in breadth, and that he has never found any other royal name than that of Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon. Many of these, and others, may perhaps be identified with those in the list of numerous towns built by Nebuchadnezzar, contained in an inscription now deposited in the India House. The extent and number of the works thus bearing the name of this great king, would almost pass belief on any evidence less conclusive; and certainly the necessity of finding inhabitants for the numerous towns built by him in this region, supplies a new and interesting motive for his zeal in sweeping the population of Judah, and doubtless of other conquered nations, into this quarter.

TWENTY-FOURTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

THE TOMB OF DANIEL.—DANIEL VIII. 2.

It appears probable that Daniel did not retain, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the high offices to which he had been promoted. This inference is built chiefly on the fact, that when the queen-mother counselled king Belshazzar to call him to interpret the mysterious handwriting on the wall, she obviously speaks of him as one but little known to the king, and enters into a recital of his services under Nebuchadnezzar,

and of the honors to which that monarch had advanced him. This would have been wholly unnecessary had Daniel still been in high employment at court. Besides, many long years had passed, and another reign had intervened, since that time; and it is rare for high state offices to be retained by the same man during a long series of years, and under successive reigns. Kings like to employ those who have been advanced by themselves, and whose fortunes have been of their making. It may also be questioned whether the honor to which the prophet was promoted by Belshazzar for the interpretation of the handwriting—that of being "third ruler of the kingdom"—would have been any material advancement to one who already possessed the high offices bestowed by Nebuchadnezzar.

The historical circumstances that followed the death of Belshazzar, and the prophet's connection with them, and the high favor he enjoyed under the Medo Persian dynasty, have already engaged our attention in the Readings in Isaiah. The only remarkable incident recorded of him under the new dynasty, was his being cast into the den of lions, and his deliverance therefrom, which drew from the king, Darius, the remarkable decree, "that in every dominion of my kingdom all men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel."

Some notice of this form of punishment, by casting to lions, has been lately taken (p. 232). It may be interesting to add, that although lions were found in Palestine in Old Testament times, the region in which this occurred—that of the Lower Euphrates and Tigris—is now the most westerly part of Asia in which lions still remain. We, indeed, never saw one ourselves, but we have conversed with those who did; and we have seen the tracks of their feet,—have been at the mouths of their dens, formed in the mounds of ancient ruins of the age of Nebuchadnezzar, and strewed all around with the bones and portions of the hides of sheep, camels, and other animals; and we have been present when their roars were heard. The following anecdote is interesting, from its having been related at Shush, the ancient Shusan of Daniel, which is supposed to

have been the scene of his miraculous deliverance, and where his tomb is still shown.

The Baron de Bode, in his *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*, writes: "An old man of our party recounted to us, in glowing terms, how he once fell into company with several lions in the very neighborhood of Shush. It would be difficult to give an idea of the vehemence of gesture and expression with which he accompanied his narrative; but his story ran thus:—

"'When a mere lad of eight or nine years old, I was sent,' he said, 'one day by my parents to scare birds from a plantation belonging to us, which lay close to the river. As I was sitting in a frail hut of rushes, I suddenly espied a lioness making her way towards my place of concealment. My liver melted into water at the sight (jighe áb shúd), and I became like one transfixed. The animal stopped short, then couched, and, rolling on the sand, appeared quite unconscious of the presence of an intruder. Although I trembled like a leaf, this afforded me some respite; but presently I became aware of the approach of another lion through the rushes, by the tremendous roaring which preceded him. They met, and apparently on very friendly terms; and for some time they gambolled like dogs together. But I felt my situation was not the better for it, as their stay might be prolonged. I was more dead than alive, expecting at every instant that they would discover me in my hiding-place; and one stroke of the paw was more than sufficient to bring down the hut. I was afraid to breathe, lest the sound should reach their ears; yet I could not prevent my teeth from chattering quite audibly. But whether it was that they were too much occupied with their own concerns, or that they are deficient in scent, I do not know;—suffice it to say, that after a short time, which to me appeared an age, they separated, each taking a different direction, and vere soon lost in the high grass.

"'It is many years since that event took place, added the old man in conclusion, 'and still I never can think of it without a shudder.' And, if I understood him right, the mental

anxiety he underwent at the time, had the effect of changing the color of his hair into gray ever since. To me this narrative had a peculiar interest, as I was standing on the very spot which the traditions of the East point out as the scene where, twenty-five centuries ago, Daniel had his miraculous escape; and could not but contrast the calm confidence of the prophet with the agitated state of the Arab youth, who had not yet learned to place complete and implicit reliance on his Heavenly Father."

The tradition which assigns Shusan as the locality of Daniel's death, and places his tomb there, is highly probable. The prophet expressly mentions that he was at that place when he had one of his visions; and we know that Cyrus established the custom for the court to spend the spring months in that city.* There are, however, two places on the lower Tigris that claim to be regarded as the ancient Susa; one is now called Shuster, and the other Shush. It is the latter that contains Daniel's tomb, and is now generally allowed to represent the ancient city. The ruins here are very extensive indeed—reaching twelve miles from one extremity to the other, and consisting, as in all the ruined sites of this country, simply of hillocks of earth and rubbish, covered with pieces of broken brick and colored tiles. Some of the mounds are very large, assuming a kind of pyramidal shape, and doubtless mark the site of important public buildings, such as palaces and temples. At the foot of one of the largest of these mounds stands the tomb of Daniel. It is of modern architecture, and has little to carry the mind back to remote ages, except the probability that this replaces the more ancient tomb that covered the mortal remains of this honored servant of God. There are, indeed, some fragments of the marble columns, with the leaves of the lotus carved on them, and which are probably of the same date as the ancient city. The white conical roof of the building, similar to the section of a honey-comb, is a remarkable object, as seen rising among the trees. In the interior of a four-cornered chamber or cell stands the sarcophagus, which is, as usual in

* Winter at Babylon spring at Susa, summer at Ecbatana.

such tombs, a high box, of a dark sort of wood, surrounded by a railing. Hanging up against this grating are several boards, with Arabic quotations from the Koran, which the devout Moslems press to their lips as they pass around the sarcophagus.

Beneath the apartment that contains the tomb of the prophet, is another vault, the entrance to which is from the outside of the court, and which is said to represent the den of lions into which Daniel was cast by order of king Darius.

The tomb is in the charge of some dervishes, who subsist upon the alms of the pilgrims who resort to the sepulchre. These dervishes are the only fixed inhabitants of the city which once contained some of the proudest palaces ever reared by human hands. It is now, in fact, a wilderness infested by lions, hyenas, and other beasts of prey.

Twenty-Fifth Week.—Sunday.

THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE.—HOSEA II.

The prophet Hosea takes peculiar pleasure in describing the church as espoused to her Lord, and in illustrating her circumstances, by analogies, drawn from that condition. These analogies, as followed out in his second chapter, are very full of matter, from which every one may draw instruction for his own soul.

The church has forsaken her Lord. She has wearied of the husband of her youth, and has forgotten the love of her espousals. She prefers other love to his, and is earnest in following the roads that lead to her undoing. But He will not forget how dear she has been and still is to Him. His divine love still, therefore, watches over her for good, and labors to work in her those convictions, however sorrowfully gained, which shall bring her back to Himself.

But how?

He makes the paths of error difficult to her feet, and the objects of her pursuit unsatisfying to her soul. "I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, so that she shall not find her paths." She finds every path that leads from Him, or that does not lead to Him,

"Puzzled with mazes, and perplexed with errors."

She who had once known the fulness of his love, and sat so long under his shadow with great delight, can find no real joy in the pleasures in which he takes no part. In the heart from which he has been driven, a vacancy remains, which the whole world, with all its pomps, its lusts, its prides, is not large enough to fill.

She is free. She has cast off the restraint of her marriage vows. Yet in this new freedom she does not, in the consciousness of liberty,

"Leap exulting like the bounding roe,"

along her paths of new delight, which had before seemed so enchanting to her view. No: in great amazement she finds that the remembrance of her first love is still a spell upon her. Its holy joys, its peace that passed all show—where are they—what has she gained comparable to them? Nothing: and she knows this now. Footsore, weary, disgusted, disappointed, repentant, she cries at last, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now."

But can she?

Not of herself. She feels that the voice which has called her back so long, and which passed her like the unregarded wind, must be heard now:—

"Return, O wanderer, return, return;
Let me not always waste my words in vain,
As I have done too long."

That word now has brought her to a pause, and any further progress along those paths of ruin has become impossible to her She has been allowed to learn, in the ways of her own choos-

ing, the misery of alienation from Him—the wretchedness of being where He is not. It is enough that her Lord, who has never forsaken her, lays his hand upon her haste, and, by the constrainings of a love that passes knowledge, brings her to a pause. She cannot go on. Can she go back? She has been enabled to form the wish to return to the home she has forsaken. But she has wandered far, and lost the homeward road. The way also is long, or it seems so to one who has so deviously wandered; and she has no strength left. Besides, will her offended Lord receive one who has been so unfaithful to Him? Has he not cast her off forever? Will He not spurn her from the door so long unfrequented by her feet? Alas for her! She cannot return unless he gives her strength—unless He guides her on the way—unless He assures her heart of welcome when she comes. All this she has. She hears his voice once more:—

> "Return and welcome: if thou wilt, thou shalt:
> Although thou canst not of thyself, yet I
> That call, can make thee able."

Yet not altogether at once may she be reinstated in the privileges of home. She has made herself unfit for that holy and happy place. Her heart has much to unlearn, and much to learn. Therefore first will He "allure her into the wilderness;" and there, apart with Him, when she has been properly humbled and cast down, and has been brought to see more clearly her forlorn estate, and to know how deeply she has sinned, then He will "speak to her heart."* He will tell her that her sins are forgiven. He will let her know that He has loved her with an everlasting love, and that, therefore, with loving-kindness has He drawn her back to Himself. He will enrich her, and strengthen her heart with exceeding great and precious promises. And then will He joyfully throw open to her "the door of hope," and bring her back into his vineyard; and then once more shall she "sing there as in the days of her

* This is the literal translation of the words rendered, "speak comfortably unto her"—verse 14.

youth"—not merely shall she sing the childlike songs her mother taught her—not merely the glad songs of her first espousals,—but the deeper and more solemn strains of one who has sinned, and been forgiven and purified—such songs as those which mark the joy there is in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Indeed, the songs and the joys are those of a second espousal—more grave, as well as more glad, than the first. For among the words which her Lord had "spoken to her heart," in the wilderness to which He lured her, were these: "I will betroth thee unto Me forever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord."

TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK—MONDAY.

THE BLACK OBELISK.—HOSEA VII. 11.

The prophet Hosea lived and prophesied during the period in which the kingdom of the ten tribes was oppressed and menaced by the Assyrians; and it appears to be chiefly to these circumstances, and to the ultimate destiny of the kingdom of these tribes, to be brought into captivity and extinction by that great nation, that his prophecies bear reference.

Assyria was to Israel what Babylon was to Judah—the appointed destroyer. But the greater part of the prophets living later than Israel's captivity, and being chiefly concerned with the condition and destiny of the kingdom of Judah, and Assyria being already overthrown, and the Babylonian empire established, it is only in two or three of the minor prophets, and in the earlier prophecies of Isaiah, that we look for direct information respecting the Assyrians. The three prophets, Hosea, Amos, and Jonah, lived when the Assyrian empire was in its most flourishing estate; when that power was well known in Syria and Palestine, and when the kingdom of Israel felt deeply the weight of its imperial arm.

Considering the repeated invasion of this realm by the Assyrians, and the successive deportations of the inhabitants, till the land was at length swept clean as with the besom of destruction—the question naturally arises, whether a people so fond as the Assyrians of commemorating, in sculpture, the military expeditions and triumphs of their kings, have left no memorial of their repeated invasions, and final subjugation of this realm. It cannot be said that it was too unimportant for such record; for the inscriptions state with much particularity the triumphs of the kings over nations so obscure that their very names are forgotten. There is hence no reason to doubt that the Israelites are represented in the sculptures at Nineveh, though it may, until lately, have seemed a matter of question whether they were represented in any of the sculptures that have yet been found, and which are probably few in number compared with those that remain to be disentombed.

A discovery of great interest has, however, been lately made, which points in this direction.

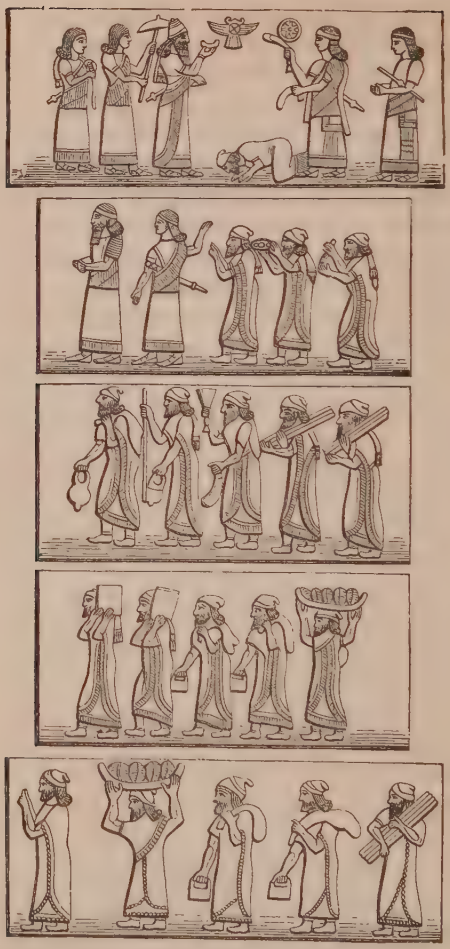
There are perhaps few of the Nineveh antiquities which have attracted more attention than the Nimrud obelisk. This monument, which is six feet six inches high, is of a species of black marble. Each side is charged with four compartments of rude sculpture, underneath which are lines of inscription in the wedge-shaped character, doubtlessly descriptive of the sculptures. These clearly represent the presentation of tribute to the Assyrian king by two different nations. One of these two nations, there is strong ground to suppose, are Israelites of the kingdom of Samaria, from the resemblance of the persons to those of the only figures in the mural sculptures of Nineveh that have been conjectured to be Israelites of Samaria, and from the like resemblance to figures in the sculptures of Egypt. We have caused the compartments which represent this people to be collected from each of the surfaces of the obelisk. The supposed Israelites of the ten tribes are clad in vestures similar in general character to those which the Egyptian sculptures ascribe to the nations inhabiting Syria—the most distinguishing characteristic in this case being a kind of

cap or bonnet, looking uncommonly like a night-cap—or, to use a more classical comparison, like a Phrygian bonnet with the peak leaning backward instead of forward.* The king stands, closely attended by two eunuchs, one the umbrella-bearer, and the other the cup-bearer with his fly-flap. Prostrate before the king in homage is the king-chief, or ambassador of the subject-nation which has sent these tributes. Other eunuchs then introduce the tribute bearers, who, as usual in such cases, make much display of their respective burdens, and are preceded by a man of their nation whose hands are not occupied by any burden, but are lifted up as if in salutation or reverence. This is, we presume, the native officer in immediate charge of the treasure.

Of what these tributes consist, it is not, in some instances, easy to say; but so far as can be ascertained, they are such articles as might have been brought from Palestine—being baskets containing fruits, bars of metal or wood, leathern-bottles, jars, and baskets, containing probably money, oil, honey, etc., and we also seem to perceive robes or rich clothes, folded up, upon the shoulders of some of the bearers.

Now, it will be borne in mind, as an undoubted historical fact, that the Israelites did render tribute to the Assyrians a good while before their final overthrow. It is stated that the last king of Israel, Hoshea, became servant to Shalmaneser king of Assyria, "and gave him presents," that is, tribute; and that the subsequent withholding of this tribute led to the final invasion and ruin of the land by the Assyrians. The probabil-

* These caps seem to us to form the only stumbling-block in the way of this identification. We lately stated the probability that the Hebrews did not ordinarily wear head-coverings. This conclusion was fairly deduced, and we are not disposed to abandon it. If Colonel Rawlinson is eventually found to be right in his interpretation, we might suppose that the subjects of the kingdom of Samaria had, by this time, adopted the cap of their northern neighbors in Lebanon: or it may be that he has applied the inscription to the wrong people, as represented on the obelisk—for that remarkable monument presents also another people—with their heads uncovered, and their hair confined by a simple fillet around their heads.



ity is, however, that the kings reigning in Samaria had rendered tribute long before Hosea, and it is mentioned in his case merely from the circumstances to which its withdrawal led. The Assyrians had invaded and conquered the part of the kingdom beyond the Jordan, as early as the reign of Jehu·

and in subsequent reigns they cut the realm short in its northern provinces. Considering the vast power of Assyria, it is little likely that its king allowed this small and reduced state, to retain even the shadow of independence, but on condition of tribute, disguised or not under the name of "presents."

Conformably to these considerations is the remarkable fact, that Colonel Rawlinson has been enabled to read the name of Jehu in the inscriptions of this obelisk; and he thus discovers that "the tribute in the second compartment of the obelisk [the *first* of ours] comes from Israel; it is the tribute of Jehu." On this hint we have taken the second compartment, and connected with it all the other compartments in which the figures are distinguished by the same dress and peculiar cap as the kneeling prince or ambassador, assuming that they form together the complete representation of the subject.

Colonel Rawlinson confesses that he might distrust his own conclusion, were it unsupported. But he has also found the names of Hazael king of Syria, the contemporary of Jehu, and of Ithobaal king of Sidon, who was also a contemporary, being the father of Jezebel the wife of Ahab. He adds: "These three identifications constitute a synchronism on which, I think, we may rely, especially as all the collateral evidence comes out satisfactorily. The tributes noted in the obelisk are all from the remote nations of the west; and what can be more natural than that the tribute from Israel should thus be put next to the tribute from Egypt. There was no Assyrian campaign at this period against Egypt or Israel;* but the kings sent offerings in order to keep on good terms with their eastern neighbors."

TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

LOCUSTS.—JOEL I. II.

More than half the short prophecy of Joel contains a wonderfully fine and vigorous description of the flight of locusts,

* A mistake, as we have just shown.

and the devastation they occasion. There is not in all literature a description of any like subject comparable to this; and if, in our happy exemption from such visitations, we have been incapable of appreciating the serious nature of a calamity occasioned by mere insects, we have only to listen to the solemn tones in which the prophet speaks of it as a national calamity, calling for acts of public mourning and humiliation, to be satisfied that the visitation from locusts is among the most awful dispensations which a land can sustain.

The present is indeed the standard Scripture passage on the subject; and we therefore give this evening to it, although it has already, in a slight measure, engaged our attention.* To illustrate this, one of the noblest passages of Hebrew poetry, adequately, in all the details which it offers, would require scarcely less than half of one of our volumes. We may, therefore, be content to produce a few remarks in explanation of some of the more remarkable points, chiefly to show the minute accuracy of the expressions employed by the prophet.

In one place,† he says that the locust's "teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek-teeth of a great lion." Laborde says, that "this comparison is just, regard being had to the proportions of the two creatures." It is especially just with respect to the strength of the bite of the locust, or, as one may say, to the power of their jaws, which is doubtless what the prophet means by "the cheek." No one can witness the nature, extent, and rapidity of their devastations without being aware of this.

Again, he compares them to horses,‡ a comparison also used in the Apocalypse.§ Commentators explain this by reference to the head of the insect, which is fancied to bear considerable resemblance to that of a horse. An active imagination may make out some faint resemblance, especially to the *skeleton* of a horse's head, but it is not a very obvious likeness, and would hardly occur to any one spontaneously in examining a locust. One ingenious naturalist, however, finds that a locust, covered entirely with its closed wings, with the exception of the legs,

* Morning Series: Fifteenth Week—Friday.

† Joel i. 6. ‡ Joel ii. 4. § Rev. ix. 7.

the head, and the belly, offers a complete resemblance to an Arab horse with the long covering called *hiran*. An analogous comparison of the locust to a horse is cited by Niebuhr as in use among the Persians and Arabians. He heard, indeed, from an Arab at Basrah, a particular comparison of the locust with other animals, but which did not much arrest his attention till he heard it repeated at Baghdad, when he remembered the comparison in the Apocalypse. This man compared the head of a locust to that of a horse, the breast to that of a lion, the legs to those of a camel, the belly to that of a serpent, the tail to that of a scorpion, and the feelers (if the traveller caught the meaning rightly) to the hair of a virgin. The Spaniards have a similarly detailed comparison, derived doubtless from the Arabs. As given in a Spanish book, it stands thus: "What animal is that which resembles many others?—the locust, which has the horns of an antelope, the eyes of a cow,* the face of a horse, the legs of a hawk, the neck of a serpent, and the wings of a dove." This does not prove much, however, as it is the genius of those people to find analogies of this nature inscrutable to any but themselves. Besides, it may be no more than the Scriptural expression adopted into the Koran, and passing thence into the common discourse and ideas of the people, as is frequent in many other instances. It seems more probable that the comparison really refers, not to anything in the head or form of the creature, but to its impetuous course, compared to the gallop of a horse. Any one who has witnessed the progress of a locust (or, in default of that, a grasshopper, which is of the same genus) upon the ground by successive leaps, will apprehend the force of this comparison. And it is avowedly with reference to *this* analogy that the Germans call the grasshopper a grass-horse (*Heupferde*), and the Italians a little horse (*cavaletta*). In fact, the motion has more resemblance to the gallop of a horse than to any animal motion known to the ancients, though we find a stronger resemblance to the movements of the kangaroo, a creature formerly unknown. In fact,

* Not a ridiculous comparison to those who remember the "ox-eyed Juno" of Homer

this comparison has often occurred to ourselves in witnessing the *ground* movements of locusts. In proportion to size, however, the leap of the locust is very far longer than that of the horse Eclipse, or of the kangaroo, and the amazing force of the leap we had occasion to measure by the strong and startling bounce with which, in their leaps, they would sometimes come against one's face when it happened to intercept them.

The prophet* specially notices the devastation of the vines and fruit trees by the locusts; though it afterwards appeared that all the products of the field, and even of the open pastures, were also consumed. It was observed, in the great invasion of Germany by locusts in the last century,† that these destructive creatures devoured the wheat, the barley, the oats, the artichokes, the leaves of trees and shrubs, but spared the vines. In the East, on the contrary, if they arrive at the time the corn is in the blade, they make this their first repast; but if this does not suffice for them, or if the corn has grown to hardness, they repair to the fruit-trees, the vines, the fig-trees, the mulberry-trees, the palms, and speedily despoil them of *all* their leaves, leaving them as forlorn and bare as in winter. The palm-tree is, however, an evergreen, and the aspect which it presents when stript of its leaves by the locusts is singular and striking—the tree being never naturally seen in that condition. The prophet mentioned that, in the awful visitation he described, the locusts had "barked the fig-trees;" and it is a fact that, impelled by the eagerness of their devouring hunger, they sometimes, with their saw-like teeth, strip off the bark of the young trees which they have chosen for their pasture. Shaw reports the ravages committed upon the vines of Algiers by the locusts in 1724. Anna Coommena relates, that

* Joel i. 7.

† The locusts have, at distant intervals, found their way further west than is usually supposed. Germany was visited by flights of locusts in the years 844, 852, 872, 873, 1544, 1733 to 1739, 1813, 1819; England in 1613, 1748; Spain in 1597, 1686, 1754, 1757; Portugal in 1602, 1750, 1757; Italy in 591, 872, 1478, 1536, 1656, 1748. Many other visitations of locusts are also recorded to have occurred in different parts of Europe.

in the time of the emperor Alexis the locusts ravaged the fig-trees, but spared the corn. Dr. E. D. Clarke states that the fields, the pastures, and the gardens in the environs of Kertsch, in Crimea, were reduced to a complete desert by the locusts before his eyes. In fact, one would think that the land they have quitted had been swept bare by a fiery wind; and never was the effect of their ravages more forcibly described than in the words of the prophet: "A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: *the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness;* yea, and nothing shall escape them."

The prophet repeatedly alludes to the gloom and darkness occasioned by the arrival of the locusts. In fact, they fly so closely, and in such dense masses, that the sun is obscured, and the light is reduced to that of the sun under eclipse,—which is a more striking contrast to the ordinary bright, brisk, brilliant daylight of the East, than to the daylight of our own climate, where the eclipse of the sun might often pass without observation. We remember, when sitting writing on a summer afternoon at Baghdad, to have been startled by a sudden obscuration, reducing the light to that of a cloudy or foggy day in this country. This could not be accounted for from any obvious cause under the always cloudless sky of Chaldea, and we rushed out to see what was the matter,—the first impression being, that there was an eclipse of the sun. It proved to be a vast and dense cloud of locusts, passing over the city, which it covered like a pall. The flight was low; and the air seemed filled with them, as with us in a heavy fall of snow. Indeed, there is nothing that will give a better idea to the English reader than this of the appearance presented and the motion observed. Only that in this case the movement was horizontal, and the flakes (formed by the body of the locusts) being opaque, seemed black between the spectator and the sun. In many parts the cloud of locusts was quite black by its thickness, which allowed not the rays of the sun to pass through; but in other parts, especially towards the outer margin, the mass was less dense, and allowed the light to penetrate.

It seemed like a vast army marching onward under the direction of a leader, which was perhaps the fact. It was nearly an hour before the whole had passed,—which may give some idea of their immense numbers, and of the ruin they must cause wherever they alight. The noise made by the motion of so many small wings was like that caused by the rushing of a mighty wind. The prophet quite as aptly—(chap. ii. 5, 6)—compares it to "the noise of chariots upon the tops of the mountains," and "like the noise of a flame of fire." The flight of locusts we mention did not alight, but passed on; but whether on account of the awful clamor made by the people, with shouts, aided by the beating of drums and kettles, to deter them from alighting, we know not. Many stragglers, however, alighted on the house-tops, and afforded to us the first opportunity of making the observations embodied in these remarks.

TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

THE PLEASANT PROPHET.—AMOS I. 1; VII. 14, 15.

AMOS was the earliest of the prophets, next to Jonah. He lived in the latter portion of the reign of Jeroboam II., king of Israel, in the early part of which Jonah seems to have flourished. He was not, however, like Jonah, a subject of that kingdom; for he was a native of Tekoah, in Judah,—a place about six miles south of Bethlehem. His prophetic mission chiefly bore reference to the northern kingdom; and in fulfilment of it, he went thither, and, in the presence of the golden-calf altar at Bethel, denounced the iniquities of Israel, and declared its impending doom. This gave much annoyance to Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, who complained to the king, declaring that "the land is not able to bear all his words." Whether Jeroboam acted on this complaint, we are not told; but we learn that Amaziah himself advised the prophet to go back to his own country, and prophesy there. The answer of Amos is interesting, from the information which it affords respecting his

condition of life :—" I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son ; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore-fruit : and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." What resulted from this does not appear ; but the prophet who gave this answer, declaring that he acted under the Lord's command ; and one who had with such unflinching boldness, discharged his mission, was not likely to withdraw, if he felt that any work remained for him to do. The tradition concerning him, indeed, is, that he remained, and was subjected to much ill-treatment from Amaziah, whose son at length forced a nail into his temple ; whereupon his friends came and removed him, still alive, to his native place, where he soon died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers.

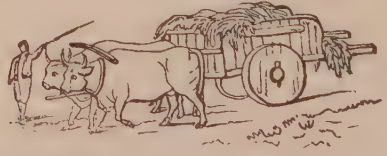
It appears, from his own account, that Amos was in fact a peasant ; and the information is interesting, from the light it throws upon his frequent allusions to rural affairs, his strong sympathy with the sufferings and oppression of the poor, and his keen sense of the luxurious habits of the great, as contrasted with that condition of life with which he was most familiar. The principal of the former set of texts may receive our particular attention.

His regular employment was that of a shepherd ; but as he had skill in the delicate operation required at one time of the year by the sycamore fig-tree, this became his occasional employment. In strictness he was not a " gatherer," but a " dresser of sycamore-fruit." The sycamore fig-tree is abundant in Palestine, and is the " sycamore," so often mentioned in Scripture. It is a large tree, with a leaf like that of a mulberry-tree, and a fruit like that of a fig-tree ; and it is from this combination that it takes its name. The fruit has the figure and smell of real figs, but is scarcely equal to them in taste, having a sort of sweetness which does not recommend it to European palates, though relished by the natives of the countries in which it grows, and to whom it forms an important article of subsistence. Naturally, it has a bitterness which would render it uneatable even to an Oriental ; and it is to deprive it

of this quality, by enabling the fruit to ripen sufficiently to subdue it, that the operation became necessary, which formed one of the employments of Amos. It was believed that the tree would not bear fruit at all, unless the bark were wounded at the time of budding, to allow the exudation of a milky fluid; and that the fruit produced would retain its bitterness, unless slightly scarified with an iron comb as it approached to ripeness. These two operations, or one of them doubtless, formed the "dressing of the sycamore-fruit."

In one place Amos has an emphatic allusion to the frail booth-like structures which formed "the habitations of the shepherds;"* and immediately after he speaks of "threshing instruments of iron,"†—the mention of which by him, and with more particularity some time after by Isaiah,‡ may suggest that threshing instruments had been then but lately introduced, and naturally attracted much attention, in a country in which threshing by the treading of cattle only had been previously in use.

In another place occurs the unique and singularly agricultural comparison, "I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves."§ This shows that carts were used by the Israelites for the removal of agricultural produce; and it is a curious circumstance, that this is the only purpose for which carts are to this day employed in Western Asia, and that very sparingly. The carts now in use are probably just such as the



Israelites had—rudely constructed, with lumbering solid wheels, and invariably drawn by oxen.

Some explanation is needed of the passage (Amos iii. 12) in which a shepherd, who has had a sheep taken from his flock by a lion, and does not hope to rescue it alive, or even the car-

* Amos i. 2. † Amos i. 3. ‡ Isaiah xxviii. 27 : xli. 15.
§ Amos ii. 13.

cass entire, is represented as still anxious, even at the risk of his life, to obtain some fragment—even if it be but the feet or a piece of the ear—from the ravenous beast. The reason for this may be found by comparing Genesis xxxi. 39 with Exodus xxii. 13, by which it appears, that when a flock was entrusted to the care of a shepherd, or other person, he was expected to make good to the owner the loss of any sheep or goat "torn of beasts," unless he could produce the carcass, or some portion of it, in evidence of the fact, and to assure the master that his servant had not improperly disposed of it for his own benefit. The same custom subsists throughout Asia, varied by slight modifications in different countries. It is even extended to camels and horses. In Persia, for instance, many of the king's horses are given out into the keeping and custody of certain persons. If one of them dies, the man who has charge of it cuts out the piece of skin that bears the royal mark, with a portion of the flesh adhering thereto, and takes it to the proper officer, who thereupon erases the horse from the royal register. The man, moreover, is sworn as to the fact that the animal died a natural death, and not from any want of care. And it is said that the experienced officers of the king's stable can tell from the state of the piece of flesh, after it has been steeped some time in water, whether the horse died of hunger, hard work or violence. The mention of "the ear" may direct our thoughts to the very long pendulous ears of one species of Syrian goat, which is in fact still the domestic species in that country. Even a *piece* of one of these remarkable ears might very well serve as

evidence of what had befallen the animal,—and, indeed, all the more proper from being so portable, and more easily preserved from corruption than more fleshy parts.

In one place Amos refers to the diseases and disasters of plants;* in another, to peculiar danger from lions and the bites of serpents;† in another, he marks, with true agricultural precision, the time of a visitation of locusts—"*at the beginning* of the shooting up of the latter growth;" and as if this were not precise enough, he adds,—"It was the latter growth after the king's mowings."‡

In the last chapter,§ there is a string of allusions to field-labor—many more may be found; and taken together, there is quite enough of this in the book of Amos to suggest to the experienced reader this prophet's state of life, even had we not his own intimation that he was "a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore-fruit."

TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE GREAT FISH—JONAH I.

JONAH is the earliest of the prophets whose books compose the volume of prophecy. In 2 Kings xiv. 25–27, there is mention of a prophecy by him, respecting the recovery of a portion of the territory of the kingdom of Israel from the Syrians; and as this was fulfilled in the time of king Jeroboam II., Jonah must have exercised his prophetic office not later than the early part of that king's reign, and probably in that of his father Joash. It will thus appear that the commencement of his prophetic ministry approached nearly to the close of that of Elisha. It, therefore, seems that during the early part of Jonah's life, he and Elisha were contemporaries; and it is quite possible that the former may have been one of the "sons (or pupils) of the prophets," so often mentioned in the history of the latter.

* Amos iv. 9. † Amos v. 19. ‡ Amos vii. 1. § Amos ix. 13.

We have lately shown, that at this time the Assyrians had made their power felt in Israel, and that certain relations subsisted between them and the Israelites, which must have made them well known to each other. Indeed, if Colonel Rawlinson's interpretation of the black obelisk be correct, the figures of the Israelites and inscriptions regarding their gifts of hom age, already existed among the sculptures of Nineveh, which "great city" was assuredly well known to most of them from report, and to many of them personally, from visits paid on political or commercial business.

It was not, therefore, from unacquaintance with the people, or from the idea of visiting a remote foreign city being strange to him, that Jonah received with dismay the command to repair to Nineveh, and proclaim its approaching destruction; but it may be that he feared peril to himself from delivering a message like this in the great metropolis of a proud and powerful people. He did not remonstrate, but, being a man apparently of a dogged and refractory temper, he determined in his own mind not to execute the command he had received. He left the country, indeed; but, instead of proceeding eastward, he hurried down to Joppa, and took his passage in the first ship that was to sail, in order to flee across the western sea. Flee from what? Avowedly, "from the presence of the Lord." That he could entertain so gross a conception of the Lord, whose servant he was, affords most lamentable evidence of the lowered notions of the Divine character and attributes which were entertained by the best instructed minds, in the presence of the corrupted religion and maimed observances of the northern kingdom. He was, however, doomed to learn something more of God than he had known before. That God sent after the ship a tremendous storm; and the danger was so imminent, that, after doing all in their power to retain the mastery of the vessel, the sailors concluded, with a superstition still common among seafaring men, that they were pursued by an angry God, on account of some guilty person in the ship. Him they resolved to detect by lot; and when the lot fell upon Jonah, he confessed that he believed the storm to be

sent upon them on his account, by the God from whose face he fled; and he advised them to rid the ship of him, by casting him into the sea. Although this had been their object in casting lots, the honest sailors were still unwilling to act upon it, and made one great effort more to bring the ship to land; but, finding all they could do unavailing, they cast the prophet into the sea, which forthwith ceased its raging. But the runaway prophet was not to be drowned. The Lord, who had prepared the storm, prepared also a great fish to swallow him up—not to destroy him, but to afford him refuge from the water, and to give him a passage to the shore from which he had embarked. Jonah remained three days and nights in the stomach of the fish, until he had, in that strange and comfortless position, been brought to a better state of mind; and then, but not before, the Lord impelled the fish to cast him up upon the sea-shore.

Now, we must not conceal that this circumstance of the fish has been treated with much scorn and some derision by unbelievers; and even believers have sometimes endeavored to avoid the difficulty by supposing the prophet was picked up by some ship that had a fish for its sign.

But where are these difficulties? Let us see.

The whale has not a swallow large enough for a man to pass through. Well, but the text does not say that the fish was a whale, but "a great fish;" and although a whale is mentioned in the reference to this passage which our Saviour makes in Matt. xii. 40, this name, particularly when collated with the original narrative, is to be understood not as the name of any one fish in particular, but as a common name for all the larger inhabitants of the deep. Until, therefore, it shall be proved that there is no great fish capable of swallowing a man entire, the objection is equally puerile and unsound. Besides, as it strikes us, it has been too hastily assumed, from the dimensions of a fish's throat in a state of collapse when dead, what it can or cannot swallow. The living throat is doubtless capable of much expansion. Indeed, we are certain this is the fact; for we have often seen taken from the bellies of large fish,

other fish entire, and so large, that no one unacquainted with the fact, and seeing them apart, would be ready to believe that the latter had been swallowed by the former. Since the days of Bochart, it has generally been supposed that "the great fish" may have been some species of shark; and it is known that entire human bodies have been found in some fishes of this kind.

Under this explanation, the objection that there have been any whales in the Mediterranean, loses its force. But the alleged fact is, after all, not true. There is evidence of whales being sometimes found in the Mediterranean, though certainly far more rarely than in the ocean. At the very place from which Jonah sailed—Joppa, now Jaffa—there was displayed for many ages, in one of its pagan temples, the huge bones of a species of whale, which the local legends pretended to be those of the sea-monster which, at that place, was slain by Perseus for the deliverance of Andromeda. An eminent naturalist gives other instances: "Procopius mentions a huge sea-monster in the Propontis, taken during his præfecture of Constantinople, in the thirty-sixth year of Justinian (A.D. 562), after having destroyed vessels, at certain intervals, for more than fifty years. Rondoletius enumerates several whales stranded or taken on the coasts of the Mediterranean. . . . In the Syrian seas, the Belgian pilgrim Lavaers, on his passage from Malta to Palestine, incidentally mentions a 'Tonynvisch,' which he further denominates an 'oil fish,' longer than the vessel, leisurely swimming along, and which, the seamen said, prognosticated bad weather. On the island of Zerbi, close to the African coast, the late commander Davies, R.N., found the bones of a cachalot whale on the beach. Shaw mentions an orca more than sixty feet long, stranded at Algiers; and the late Admiral Ross Donelly saw one in the Mediterranean, near the island of Albaran. There are, besides, numerous sharks of the largest species in the seas of the Levant, and also in the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, as well as cetacea, and two species of *halicore* or *dugong*, which are herbivorous ani-

mals, intermediate between whales and seals."* After this, and after what we have stated as to the swallow of fishes, Jonah's fish might possibly be a whale, if any one wishes thus to limit the signification of the word employed. In that case, it may not have been necessary for the fish to swallow the prophet at all; for in the mouth of the common whale there is a cavity as large as a room, in which he might have been retained with less discomfort to himself than in the stomach of any fish.

Another objection—that a man could not live in the stomach of a fish—is answered by the fact, that the animal stomach has no power upon living substances; and one who received no injury from the fish before being swallowed, would remain alive for a considerable time, unless suffocated in so uncongenial a situation and element. In fact, suffocation in any case was the real danger; and to meet this, there is a sufficient answer in the fact, that the Lord prepared the fish, and provided such a fish as was suited to the purpose in view. It was the Lord's doing, and evidently miraculous. If one disbelieves miracles altogether, it is useless to contend with him about this one; but if he does believe in any miracles, he will see nothing too hard for the Lord in all this; and he will not suppose it more difficult for Him to preserve Jonah from suffocation in the mouth or stomach of a fish, than to preserve the three Hebrew youths from harm "in the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

NINEVEH.—JONAH III. 3.

The command to Jonah to proceed to Nineveh and proclaim its doom, was soon renewed, and he no longer sought to shun the duty thus imposed.

He reached Nineveh, which, we are told, was "an exceed-

* Colonel C. Hamilton Smith: Art. Whale, in *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.*

ing great city of three days' journey." This may be reckoned at about sixty miles. And that it must be understood of the *circumference* and not of the *length*, is clear, not only from the coincidences of the statements of ancient writers with modern discoveries, but from the necessities of the case, and from the inferences deducible from the assigned population. Those who, from this text, talk of the city as sixty miles long, cannot really have formed a practical idea of such a city. London, whose vast extent astonishes the world, and which contains a population twice or thrice that of Nineveh, cannot be reckoned as more than eight miles in length. If a population of not more than one third or one half that of London, or even equal thereto, were expanded over a surface equal to eight times that of London, it would cease to be a city for any of the purposes of a concentrated community, but would be a country sparsely dotted with human habitations. Even to give it a circumference of sixty miles, with an area twice the extent of London, for certainly not more, and probably much less, than half the population, needs an explanation as to the loose mode in which ancient oriental cities were constructed. But it will be urged that Jonah went "a day's journey into the city" delivering the message entrusted to him. This is, indeed, the principal argument for understanding the previous passage to refer to the diameter. But it seems to us to prove just the reverse. If the city were in length three days' journey, why should he go only one day's journey into it delivering the denunciations entrusted to him, leaving two thirds of the city unvisited? The meaning clearly is, that he began to give his declaration as he entered the city, and continued to deliver it through the entire day's journey, which it took him to traverse its whole extent. In fact, the two statements coincide with and support each other—for a city three days' journey in circumference, will be about one day's journey in diameter. Diodorus, the principal ancient authority, moreover, gives to the circumference a measurement which, reduced from stadia (480), makes just sixty miles; and Dr. Layard and Mr. Bonomi, though they differ

in drawing the boundary line, bring the result to the same circumference.

The population, which forms an element in this calculation, is stated in the book before us to comprise "six score thousand persons, who cannot discern between their right hand and their left." Some think that this latter phrase denotes a condition of spiritual ignorance, and expresses the entire population. But as a population not exceeding 120,000 persons would be inordinately out of proportion to the most limited extent that can be assigned to the city, we take the phrase to indicate young children, as is, indeed, commonly understood. These are usually one fifth of the entire population of any place, so that this would make the population of Nineveh about 600,000, not more than one third that of London—so that the area of Nineveh being twice as great, the population of the British metropolis is six times more dense than was that of the Assyrian capital. This needs some explanation. A learned German writer* affords some valuable ideas with regard to the origination of such cities as those of Nineveh and Babylon. He shows that the great cities of Asia were constituted in a manner quite different from those of Europe. They generally grew out of the settlements of nomade conquerors, who fixed their abode in a subjugated country, and changed their old mode of life for one more settled and peaceful. The encampment of a chieftain, near the walls of some already existing capital, was speedily converted into a new city which eclipsed the splendor of the old one. The vanquished people were employed in its erection; the plan of the camp, which it followed in every particular, ensured its symmetry, and enables us to account for its square form, and the straight lines in which its streets extended and intersected each other at right angles, as well as for their great extent and loose construction. The extent of these cities forms but little guide to the European in estimating their population. The compact close streets of Europe, and especially of the walled towns on the Continent, form a striking contrast to the scattered mansions of the East

* HEEREN, *Historical Researches*, ii. 150.

surrounded with their extensive courts and gardens, occupying a very large proportion of the whole area. An equal space, therefore, was far from containing the same number of men as in the cities of Europe.

How far this applies to Nineveh we can judge from the statements already made with regard to its extent as compared with its population, and still more, from what we know historically respecting Babylon, which was of about the same extent as Nineveh, and was, without doubt, laid out on the same general plan. Of this city Quintus Curtius states, that "the buildings do not reach to the walls, but are at the distance of an acre (*jugerum*) from them. Neither is the whole city covered with houses, but only ninety furlongs (*stadia*); nor do the houses stand in rows by each other, but the intervals which separate them are sown and cultivated that they may furnish subsistence in case of siege." This was the more important, as in the absence, in these regions, of any other defences than such as the great cities supplied, it was usual for the inhabitants of the open country, for a considerable distance round, to abandon their several towns and villages, and flock into the metropolis on the approach of an enemy; and this was a contingency that needed a special provision, from the frequency of its occurrence in these ancient states, with whom war was the great business of life, and peace the rare exception.

There were also pasture grounds in such cities for the subsistence of cattle in case of siege. In prospect of a long siege, we should probably slay our cattle and salt them down, from the inability to provide pasture for them, and to save the consumption which their keep involves. This is a resource not thought of by the Orientals formerly or now, as they do not use salted meats. Their only resource was to keep the animals alive till they were wanted for food, and this was effected by providing pasture for them within the walls, necessitating a large appropriation of space unoccupied by buildings.

The probability also is, that the majority of the houses of Nineveh, like those of many eastern cities of the present day, consisted but of one story, spread therefore over a large extent

of ground. We have always observed the Orientals to be exceedingly averse to ascending stairs; and where ground is no object, as it seldom is, they consider it absurd to build habitations in which they must be continually going up stairs and down, when they are at liberty to spread out their dwellings over the ground as widely as they like. Hence the accommodation which we secure by piling story upon story, they think that they realize with much more advantage by placing these stories separately upon the ground, connecting them together by doors, galleries, courts, and passages. This is their idea of comfort; and we must confess to being considerably of their opinion. The result is, however, that the houses of an eastern gentleman in a town will generally occupy four or five times as much ground, as that of an English gentleman in the corresponding condition of life.

TWENTY-FIFTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

JONAH IN NINEVEH.—JONAH III.

It is now with the firm step and steady aspect of one who knows that the burden of the Lord is upon him, that Jonah enters the gates of Nineveh the Great. He may still have doubts and fears as to the result; but he now fears God more, and wavers not in his purpose to discharge faithfully the mission committed to him. He believed that the Lord who sent him could give strength and power to His own words; and he had cause to know that His arm was strong to deliver him from all evil that might befall. "Still he must have been the subject of strange and conflicting emotions, when he entered the gates of that proud capital. The stern soldiers upon the battlements, armed with swords and shields, helmets and spears—the colossal images of winged compound animals that guarded the gates—the gorgeous chariots and horsemen that rattled and bounded through the streets—the pomp and state of the royal palaces—the signs of trade and commerce, of

wealth and luxury, of pleasure and wickedness on every hand —must have amazed and perplexed the prophet, conscious of his utter loneliness amidst a mighty population, of his despicable poverty amidst abounding riches, of his rough and foreign aspect amidst a proud and polished community—there was enough to shake his faith, and to cowardize his bold, haughty, and scornful spirit. Yet he dared not a second time abandon his mission. He, therefore, passed along the broad ways and great places of concourse, crying in solemn tones, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.'"*

Who and what is he? the people ask. Is it a madman who thus speaks, or a mocker, who delights to "scatter firebrands, arrows, and death?" His intelligent and sober aspect forbids the supposition: he bears himself as a man deeply in earnest, and alive to the awful importance of the work he has in hand: and the very oneness of the message he delivers—that he has just this solitary message to proclaim—seems to betoken all the more an assured conviction of the truth and certainty of it. The busy crowd is by-and-by arrested: a solemn awe steals over the minds of the people: they press around the preacher to know who and whence he is, and why he utters such an ominous cry in their streets; and hearing, as they now do, that, so far from lightly denouncing this doom against them, he had already, at the hazard of his life, shrunk from executing the charge committed to him—that he had been cast out for his wilful reluctance, into the mighty deep, and miraculously restored, only that he might be sent forth anew to utter the cry they now heard of approaching destruction—learning all this concerning Jonah and his burden, how solemn and perilous must their situation have appeared in their eyes! Though personally a stranger to them, this man's fortunes, it seems, had yet been most intimately bound up with theirs: he has undergone wonderful and unheard-of things on their account.†

What other concurrent circumstances there may have been to impress their minds with the conviction that they stood on

* Rev. J. Blackburn: *Nineveh, its Rise and Fall.* London, 1850.

† Rev. P. Fairbairn's *Jonah.* Edinburgh, 1849.

the verge of ruin, or whether the word of God simply, in its own Divine energy, as delivered by the prophet, wrought upon their souls, certain it is that they evinced no disposition to treat the message with scorn, or the messenger with insult, but were deeply moved to alarm and grief.

This commotion in the city soon reached the ears of the king; and it cannot be doubted that he forthwith sent to have the strange prophet brought before him.

It is plain, from the sculptures, that the king of Assyria was approached, like all Oriental princes, with such tokens of profound reverence as, in fact, amounted to something like religious adoration. "Seated on his throne of state, his eunuchs, ministers, and other great officers stood around him, while those who were brought before him, forgetting the erect dignity of human nature, prostrated themselves in the most abject manner, at his feet. Imagine Jonah introduced into the royal palace, and you will see that the scene and circumstances must have sorely tried his faith and steadfastness. As he passed along the lengthened corridors towards the hall of audience, he must have been struck with the air of uncommon splendor that surrounded him. On the walls he beheld the sculptured figures of priests and eunuchs, of kings, heroes, and ministers of state, of genii and idol gods, of battles and hunting scenes, all elaborately and gorgeously colored; while there stood at the angles of the passages colossal statues of strange winged, compound creatures, like the guardian spirits of the place."*

A sight so strange to him—such abounding evidence of the wealth, the power, and the idolatry of the monarch into whose presence he was about to enter—might well have moved even the stern spirit of the prophet. But he now stood there invested with a greatness not his own, and far exceeding all the grandeur around him; and he flinched not to declare unto the greatest king then upon earth, the whole counsel of God against this proud Nineveh. As he heard the word of doom, God smote his heart with alarm and repentance. The common feeling became his; and he sanctioned and ordained its solemn

* Blackburn's *Nineveh.*

public expression, by acts of general mourning and humiliation. He came down from the throne before which a score of kings bent their knees; he laid all his glorious imperial robes aside, and, investing his person with sackcloth, sat down among the ashes. Nor he alone; for a decree went forth, ordaining fasting and sackcloth for man and beast, and urging every one to turn from his evil way and from the violence of his hands. The prophet had not called them to repentance, but had warned them of impending doom; but this they still trusted might not be irrevocable, and they ventured to seize hold of a hope which the prophet had not extended to them: "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Blessed was that thought of theirs. The Lord, abundant in mercy, had inspired them, at that time, with a conception of Him which his prophet had not taught. It was *not* yet too late. All was *not* yet lost. God beheld their acts; he saw that they turned from their evil ways; and then "God repented of the evil that He said He would do unto them, and He did it not."

It seems a remarkable circumstance, that the Ninevites should have extended the acts of fasting and humiliation to their cattle. We find nothing of this among the Hebrews; but it was a custom among the ancient heathen nations to withhold food from their cattle, as well as from themselves, in times of mourning and humiliation, and that, in some instances, they cut off the hair of their beasts as well as their own. The animals which were, in this instance, covered with sackcloth, were doubtless, horses, mules, asses, and camels, which were divested of their usual caparisons and ornaments, and invested with sackcloth for the occasion—a custom having some analogy to that of our clothing with black the horses employed in funereal solemnities.

Twenty-Sixth Week—Sunday.

THE GOURD.—JONAH IV.

That his preaching had been instrumental in saving a great city from destruction,—that so many persons, men, women, and children, had been spared from death—this must, of course, have been highly gratifying to Jonah.

It was not. "It displeased him exceedingly."

That the Lord had laid so much honor upon him, and had allowed mercy to prevail over judgment, must have been a matter of great joy to him, and of much thankfulness to God.

No. "He was very angry."

Lord, what is man?

One cannot love this Jonah, or think well of him. We seem unable to recognize in him those signs of grace which one expects to see adorning the commissioned servants of God. The Lord, however, does not choose unfit instruments for his work; though he does often work by instruments that seem to man most unfit. It may be recollected that we do not know all Jonah's character, but only some parts of it excited under rare and extraordinary influences. Yet it must be confessed there is such a pervading homogeneity in *all* the traits that appear in his history, as to suggest that we see in them his real and natural character—a character, no doubt, solidly good, and open to conviction, but habitually irascible and morose, and apt, under exciting circumstances, to view them in their worst and most gloomy aspects.

The present state of his mind is a fearful sight. There is no reason to doubt—indeed it is all but avowed—that he would much rather see this great city, with its people, perish, than that they should repent and be spared. There are two grounds for this state of feeling: first, his Jewish hatred against the Assyrians as idolaters and the oppressors of his country; and next, his fear that he should seem a false prophet, if his

denunciations were not accomplished. Indeed, he declares that it was his knowledge that the Lord was "very merciful," and would probably forgive them if they repented, that lay at the root of his original reluctance to undertake this office that had been forced upon him; and he declares that he would far prefer to yield up his own life than see his character as a prophet thus compromised. So morbid had his state of feeling become, that he would not bring himself to believe that the city could be spared, after he had, in the Lord's name, pronounced its doom. He therefore posted himself on an advantageous station in the environs—near enough for observation, but distant enough for safety,—and resolved to remain there till the time had elapsed within which he had declared the city should be destroyed.

Here the Lord, being merciful unto him, purposed to give him a lesson, salutary to him, and fitted to impress his wilful but not hardened mind.

He had made a booth, and rested under its shade. "He sat in his booth for a while, enjoying as much comfort as a sullen and discontened man, who was dissatisfied with the Divine dispensations, and scarcely satisfied with himself, could be supposed to enjoy. But his comfort diminished as the foliage with which he had constructed this green booth began to wither; and in such a climate, where the fierce heat would soon extract the moisture and shrivel the leaves, it would soon become insufficient to afford him protection against the rays of the sun, and thus his external circumstances would become as uncomfortable as was his state of mind."* The Lord then prepared "a gourd" to come up over Jonah, "that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief." Of this relief the prophet was "exceedingly glad." But God prepared a worm, which smote the gourd, so that it withered in a

* *Practical Exposition of the Book of Jonah.* By the Rev. James Peddie, D.D. Edinburgh, Oliphant and Sons. 1842. The book of Jonah seems a favorite object of study in Scotland. Our citations indicate three excellent books which have, within these few years, been published in Edinburgh thereon.

night. Then, when the sun rose next day, the Lord prepared a vehement east wind, and the sun beat fiercely upon the prophet's head until he fainted, and wished that he were dead. Then it was the Lord's time to speak. "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" The vehement and shockingly unbecoming answer was, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." Then said the Lord, in amazing condescension to the weakness of his servant, "Thou wouldst have spared the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, nor madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein there are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle?"

Thus ends the book of Jonah. We are not told how this remonstrance wrought upon the prophet. We may hope that *he* profited by it. We know that *we* may.

"The prophet trusted in his gourd. He rejoiced in it; but he forgot the God who sent it. The gift was, therefore, taken away; and where was Jonah then? Precisely where the sons of men are now, when their refuges of lies are swept away from around them. It was only for a single day that Jonah enjoyed the gourd, but that was enough to unveil the condition of his heart, when the thing in which he trusted withered before his eyes. It is in miniature, or in compend, the history of man. By nature we have all some gourd under which we sit—we all have something which we put in the place of God. His gifts are preferred to himself; for we all think it better to have a creature for a portion than God over all, blessed forever.

"But is it not a blessing when these gourds wither? Is it not mercy in God to sweep them utterly away, even though the heart should be half broken by the loss? There is one reposing, for example, on his goods laid up for many days, and regarding them just as Jonah did the goodly foliage of the sheltering plant. Is it not a mercy, in the high reckoning of eternity at least, to have these gifts of God withdrawn, that God himself may be our trust? Another is reposing under

the shadow of some protecting friend. To him, and not to God, the eye of hope, or the heart of expectation turns. Now, is it not a mercy, according to the standard of the sanctuary at least, that that earthly friend should be withdrawn, that we may learn to lean upon the Lord alone? A third may be seeking all the heaven which he knows, in something which perishes in the using. Is it not well that the delusion should be swept away, that God may be sought, and eternity provided for? Many will bless God forever because their gourds were withered—just as the saints in glory praise the King of saints, 'because they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented.' Had the gourd not withered, the soul would not have been saved; and the withering of the gourd, therefore, makes the anthem of the saved the louder."*

Another point entitled to remark, is the assertion of the Lord's providence in the frequent intimation that the *Lord prepared* all the material and circumstantial agencies that wrought in the history of Jonah. In his first adventure, the Lord prepared the storm, the Lord prepared the great fish; and, in the second, the Lord prepared the gourd, the Lord prepared the worm, the Lord prepared the east wind—all is of the Lord's preparing. This also accounts for everything; and we are not bound, in the case of the gourd, for instance, to find a plant which, without the special ordinance of the Lord's providence, should attain such growth in a night as to afford adequate shelter to the prophet's head. The Lord, however, is in all his dispensations economical of prodigies; and we are to suppose that in this instance He did not create a new plant for the occasion, or choose one of naturally slow growth. It is more in the ordinary course of even his miraculous providence to suppose that a plant naturally of rapid growth was chosen, and that this natural quickness of growth was preternaturally stimulated and quickened for the occasion. The word employed in

* *Man by Nature and Grace; or, Lessons from the Book of Jonah.* By the Rev. W. K. Tweedie. Edinburgh, 1850.

the original Hebrew is generally supposed to denote the castor-oil plant. It is of exceedingly rapid growth, and its broad palmatic leaves extend a grateful shade over the parched traveller. It is not unknown to our gardens; but it does not in them, though still a plant of most rapid growth, attain the size or grow with the quickness that it does in the region of the Tigris.

TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK—MONDAY.

SAMARIA AND ZION.—MICAH I. 6; III. 12.

The prophet Micah has a remarkable prophecy respecting each of the two capitals of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which have both been accomplished in their time. It will be remembered that both Samaria and Jerusalem were flourishing capitals at the time of the prophecy; and nothing could in human calculation have seemed less likely than that they should be brought into the condition the prophet intimates. Foreign conquest was indeed possible, and had already been foretold of both kingdoms by different prophets. But it by no means followed that these cities should suffer to the extent foreshown; for it was not the usual policy of conquerors to destroy the cities they reduced, but rather to preserve them as monuments of their own glory.

But Micah prophesies of Samaria, that the Lord would "make Samaria as a heap of a field, and as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." This prediction is not of that class, the terms of which may be applicable to many different cities in given localities, and which, as we lately said, have been too much pressed in the specific application of details; but it has obviously, as in the case of Tyre, though not altogether in the same degree, a definite reference to circumstances, especially appropriate to a town situated as Samaria was. In the *Narrative* of Messrs. Bonhar and M'Cheyne, they relate that "We read over the prophecy of Micah, regarding Samaria, as we drew near to it, and conversed

together as to its full meaning. We asked Dr. Keith what he understood by the expression, 'I will make Samaria as *a heap of the field*.' He said, he supposed the ancient stones of Samaria would be found, not in the form of ruins, but gathered into heaps in the same manner as in cleaning a vineyard, or as our farmers at home clean their fields, by gathering the stones together." Presently this conjecture was found to be completely verified; but *how*, they do not tell so clearly as Dr. Keith himself, in the last edition (1848) of his *Evidence of Prophecy*. "It is even reduced to be as a heap of the field. The stones which yet lie on its surface, bereft of the glory that might seem to hover round a ruin, however defaced, have been gathered singly, and cast into heaps, as it were, the heaps of a field, and not the remains of a capital. The ground has been cleared of them, to form the gardens or patches of cultivated ground possessed by the inhabitants of the wretched village which stands at the extremity of the site of the ancient city. The stones, as if in a field or vineyard, have been manifestly gathered into heaps to prepare the ground for being sown or planted. These stones evidently belonged to the buildings of the city."

But only a small portion of its remains exist in this shape upon the top of the hill, "the crown of pride," whereon the city stood; for, in conformity with the remainder of the prediction, the stones have been largely "poured down into the valley." Ascending the side of the hill to its summit, Bonar and M'Cheyne observed that the whole of the face of the hill on that side suggests the idea, that the buildings of the ancient city had been thrown down from the top of the hill. Reaching the top, and going round the whole summit, they found marks of the same process everywhere. The people of the locality, in order to make room for their fields and gardens, had poured down the remains of the old buildings into the valley. Masses of stone, and in one place two broken columns are seen, as it were on their way to the bottom of the hill, where they remain either partially strewed over the ground, or gathered into heaps among the trees.

In speaking of Jerusalem, the prophet says, especially of Mount Zion, then the stronghold, as well as the court end of the town, and as such covered with palaces and fortifications—that it should "*be ploughed as a field.*" The limitation of this to Mount Zion, shows that the prophet had in view the fact, that the site of the city would not, like many other cities that are the subject of prophecy, be wholly forsaken; but although for a time it should lie in "heaps," as after the destructions by the Chaldeans and the Romans, yet that it should eventually remain an inhabited site, but so greatly reduced in extent and importance, that the parts then enclosed within its walls should become suburban fields and gardens. This view, which we submit as the right one, is confirmed by the fact, that such a site as that of Mount Zion would never be cultivated but by people still occupying some part of the site of old Jerusalem. The fact that Zion is at this day ploughed as a field is undoubted. This was shown long ago by Dr. Richardson, who says that, at the time he was there, one part of it supported a crop of barley; another was undergoing the labor of the plough; and he observed that the soil turned up, consisted of stone and lime mixed with earth, such as is usually met with in the foundations of ruined cities. Dr. Keith says, that, on his first visit to Zion, he and his friends gathered some ears of barley from a field that had been ploughed and reaped; and that on his last visit he saw the plough as in any other field, actually cleaving the soil of Zion.

The prophecy may also have contemplated another fulfilment. It was a custom of ancient conquerors to draw a plough over a conquered and ruined city, designing to express by this act that the site should be built upon no more, but should be given to agriculture. Now it is well known that, after the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans, Turnus Rufus, the general left on the spot, passed the plough over the site, in conformity with orders received from the emperor; in consequence of which, the site remained for many years utterly desolate.

TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

RUIN OF NINEVEH.—NAHUM II. III.

The whole of the prophecy of Nahum is "the burden of Nineveh," and is occupied with a most animated description of the future downfall of that great city; and the accounts of its overthrow, which the ancient historians have left, with the recent discoveries made on the spot, afford ample evidence of the exact fulfilment of his predictions

The event was brought about by the combined revolt of the Medes and Babylonians against the luxurious tyrant who then occupied the Assyrian throne. The king gave them battle, and was for a time successful; but eventually the allied revolters, gaining continual accessions of strength, defeated him, and he was constrained to shut himself in the city, and prepare to sustain a siege, until the forces he had summoned from the remote provinces of his empire should arrive to his relief. Relying much upon an ancient oracle—that the city would never be taken until the river became its enemy—he was by no means dispirited, but prepared for the siege with a degree of courage, skill, and judicious forethought, for which he does not seem to have previously had credit. He sent away his family and treasure to the care of a distant friend on the borders of the Black Sea; he strengthened and repaired the fortifications and he laid in large stores of ammunition and provisions for the use of the soldiers and inhabitants. The siege had lasted two years, and no immediate cause of alarm for the safety of the city existed, when there was an extraordinary overflow of the Tigris, which carried away no less than twenty furlongs of the great wall of the city towards the river. Seeing this, and remembering the old oracle, the king gave up for lost, and withdrew to his palace, which, like another Zimri, he set on fire, and perished in the flames with all his concubines. The army of the confederates entered precipitately, by the breach thus unexpectedly presented, and completed the ruin of the city.

Now the siege was distinctly foretold by the prophet, and the extensive preparations that were made for it. "Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strongholds: Go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brickkiln." Nahum iii. 14.

The agency of the river and its waters in the destruction of the city, is still more emphatically indicated. Babylon as well as Nineveh, were destroyed through the agency of the rivers upon which they stood, and at first view this may suggest that the doom of the two cities is so similar that what is said of one may apply to the other. But closer consideration presents essential differences. In the case of Babylon the river was "dried up," that is, exhausted, so as to admit the enemy; but in the case of Nineveh the very reverse occurs—the river overflows its banks, and becomes an immediate and active agent in the city's overthrow. "With an over-running flood shall He make an utter end of the place thereof. The gates of the river shall be opened, *and the palace shall be dissolved.* Nineveh of old is like a pool of water." Of the appropriateness of every point in this description to an inundation of the Tigris, we are ourselves but too well able to speak, having been present in the greatest city (Baghdad) now upon the same river, when it was in most part destroyed by the most extensive inundation that has been known in modern times. The authorities do not state the time of the year when the Nineveh inundation occurred. The stream of this river is swollen twice in the year—in spring, from the melting of the snow in the mountains of Armenia. This is the greatest swell; the whole of that country, of which this river is one of the principal drains being thickly covered with snow during the winter months. The other inundation is from the fall of the autumnal rains. But any serious inundation is so rare that it has no place among the contingencies which the inhabitants contemplate, and therefore they build their houses of materials little suited to withstand wet. The humbler dwellings are of sun-dried brick, which is speedily dissolved in water and is even damaged by heavy rains. The better dwellings have apparently strong and thick walls of kiln-burnt bricks—but this is merely a casing, the interior being either of sun-dried

bricks of loose texture, or of mere earthly rubbish, and when the water soaks through the outer casing, the interior mass *dissolves*, or settles so as to break down the outer casing, and the building suddenly gives way. In our own house, as in most others, there were underground cellars, in which the people live for coolness during the heats of summer. These extensive cellars (called *serdaubs*) were soon filled deeply with water, which soaked through the basement walls, and caused the part of the house standing over the cellars to give way. This happened so suddenly that, had not attention been drawn, in the merciful providence of God, to a small chink in the wall of the principal apartment, which had not been previously observed, some of us must have perished in the ruins. Indeed, as it was, we had only finally withdrawn a few minutes when the building on that side fell in with a tremendous crash, darkening the air at the same time with immense clouds of dust. In the same way the greater part of the city was destroyed. In one night a large part of the city wall gave way, and then a vast number of houses fell by the irruption of the waters, burying thousands of the inhabitants among the ruins of their own homes. Since the destruction of Nineveh there has not, that we remember, been any parallel ruin of a great city, by the inundation of a river; and this was *the same river*,—and how singularly appropriate to the mode in which the water acts upon the buildings on that river, cannot but strike the most careless attention—"the palace shall be *dissolved*."

It is further a singularly parallel circumstance that the people of Baghdad were in expectation of a siege at the very time of the inundation. But in this case the extent of the overflow around the city, and the time it took to subside, allowed time for the repair of the wall before the hostile army could approach, so that it was enabled to sustain a regular siege, and surrendered at last by capitulation.

But *fire* was also to be an agent in the destruction of Nineveh. "They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry."* "The fire shall devour thy bars."† "The fire shall devour thee."

* Nahum i. 10. † Nahum iii. 13.

Secular history does, as we have shown, point to this agency but not with so much distinctness and fulness of meaning as the actual ruins. It was formerly thought sufficient to point to the historical fact that the king destroyed himself by fire upon a funeral pile of his costly furniture and treasures. But the words of the prophet imply a more extensive conflagration, and the excavations lately made upon the site have distinctly confirmed this by showing that the city, or at least the public buildings, must have been fired by the conquerors after they had completed their work of slaughter and pillage. M. Botta is unable to account for the appearances which he found in the Khorsabad palace, but by supposing that the roof was of timber, and, being fired, fell into the area of the building, and continued burning a long time. During the excavations a considerable quantity of charcoal, and even pieces of wood, either half burnt or in a perfect state of preservation, were found in many places. The lining of the chambers also bears certain marks of the action of fire. In fact, while the outside walls are untouched, the inside are calcined by intense heat. The appearances are such as could not be produced by the burning of a quantity of furniture. There must have been a violent and prolonged fire to be able to calcine not only a few places, but every part of the slabs of gypsum, which were ten feet high, and several inches thick, reducing them so thoroughly to lime that they rapidly fell to pieces on being exposed to the air.

Nor were these appearances confined to this locality. Layard makes the same observations with reference to the ruins of the palace at Koyunjik. "The palace had been destroyed by fire. The alabaster slabs were almost all reduced to lime, and many of them fell to pieces as soon as uncovered. The places that others had occupied could only be traced by a thin white deposit, left by the burnt alabaster upon the walls of sun-dried bricks, and having the appearance of a coating of plaster."

TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

HABAKKUK.

It has sometimes appeared to us matter of regret, that this prophet had not a more sonorous name. No people ever had finer proper names than the Hebrews, whether we regard the sound or the signification. But *this*, as regards the sound, is certainly an exception, and it seems the very worst of all their names—it is, in fact, difficult to pronounce such a collocation of syllables with gravity; and so offensive was it to the delicate organs of the Greeks, that translators and others who had occasion to produce it, modified it almost beyond recognition. Persons who like to give Scripture names to their children, have shunned this one; while it has been eagerly seized by novelists and play-wrights as a suitable denomination for characters they designed to exhibit in some absurd point of view. The poet asks, "What is there in a name?" But there *is* something in a name, and the longer any one lives, the more cause he has to find that names are things.

We apprehend that this name has been a great disparagement to our prophet; and has in no faint degree operated in causing many readers unconsciously to hold the book in less regard than they might otherwise have done, and to entertain a very inadequate notion of the peculiar claims of this great prophet to their attention. We call him "great," because it is only in the small extent of his book of prophecy, that he is in anything behind the very chiefest of the prophets.

The subject of which the prophet treats is in itself grand, and had a peculiar interest to an Israelite.

In prophetic vision, Habakkuk beholds the foe invade his native land—the temple and its worship abolished—the sacred land and the free nation given over to devastation and to opprobrium. A prospect like this was well suited to plunge any sensitive heart into the most bitter grief; and when realized in all the sharpness of prophetic perception, it could not but rend

asunder a heart so warm and ardent as that of Habakkuk. It was not to be expected that a soul like his should make its inspirations heard in soft and plaintive notes—it must speak in the loud sound of the trumpet. It were difficult to find words to set forth adequately the exalted claims and peculiar merits of this high minstrel of grief and joy, of desolateness and hope, of scorn and derision. In the small compass of this prophet's book may be found, as in a compendium, all the glories and excellencies of prophetic poetry. Nothing can be more magnificent and sublime than the divine hymn which terminates his book—nothing more terrible than his threats—nothing more biting than his scorn—nothing more sweet and safe than his consolations. On Habakkuk God had bestowed in large measure all the qualities which belong to a great poet—an imagination equal to the reception and transmission of the grandest ideas—an exquisite judgment, which imparts to his figures and pictures the utmost regularity and delicacy, and the most exact proportions; and a power over language, which gives so much harmony and softness, so much brilliancy and strength to all his utterances.

Habakkuk begins his poem with one animated portraiture, and closes it with another. Surely there is no poet who ever described the march of a conqueror—mighty and full of arrogance, in more vivid colors than he has done that of the Chaldeans—"That bitter and impetuous nation, which traverseth the wide regions of the earth, to seize upon habitations belonging not to it," etc.; riding upon horses "swifter than leopards, and fiercer than evening wolves,"* etc. Who has ever uttered more derisive taunts than those in which the prophet proclaims the eventual triumph of the oppressed people over their proud tyrants—fallen from the height of their grandeur, and trodden beneath the feet of their enemies.† What poet has traced with so much force and sublimity as this one, the dread solemnity of universal nature when the Lord descends upon the earth.‡ All the ancient history of the Hebrews opens up to afford the images and pictures of his

* Hab. i. 6–11. † Hab. ii. 6–17. ‡ Hab. iii. 3–15.

great and marvellous scenes. All that nature has of the dreadful and magnificent becomes subservient to the aim of his inspired pen. When He came in his Almightiness, "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise." "Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet." At his presence "the everlasting mountains were scattered, and the perpetual hills did bow." The "sun and moon stand still in their habitation," at the greater brightness of his arrows as they flew, at the gleam of his glittering spear. Yet amid all these terrors, there is rest for the faithful soul. "The Lord God is my strength," and "although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Language is at best an imperfect instrument of thought—still more imperfect as the vehicle of high inspirations from heaven. And, in the case of Habakkuk, we seem to see the prophet grasping to seize words worthy to express his great conceptions, and images which may adequately represent them. Sometimes he adopts the expressions of earlier prophets, but he does not imitate them; and all that he takes becomes his own, fused up in the solid and glowing mass of his golden prophecy.

This view* of Habakkuk's prophetic poem, is in substantial agreement with that of most writers who have critically studied the poetry of prophecy.

* It is mainly based on that of Eichhorn, who, in his *Einleitung in der Alte Testament* (*Introduction to the Old Testament*), has given more attention to the special characteristics of Habakkuk than any other writer. We have not exactly translated his remarks, but have reported them with such alterations and additions as seemed desirable for the English reader.

TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

GAZA.—ZEPHANIAH II. 4.

GAZA is very often mentioned in sacred history and prophecy. Most readers remember it chiefly as the scene of one of Samson's most remarkable exploits, and of his death; while others regard it with deeper interest, as a city over which the sure doom of prophecy hangs.

One prophet declares that "Baldness is come upon Gaza;"* another foretells that "A fire should come upon the wall of Gaza which should devour the palaces thereof;"† Zephaniah, whose text is before us, predicts that "Gaza shall be forsaken;" and Zechariah‡ declares that "The king shall perish from Gaza." About this prophecy, and that of Amos, there can be no question. The city has been without a native prince from the time of Alexander the Great, and that it has been destroyed at least once by fire, kindled by hostile conquerors, is known.

But what is meant by the *baldness* that was to come upon Gaza? and what of its being *forsaken*, when it remains at this day one of the most important towns of Palestine?—not only subsisting, but not declining, and, indeed, increasing in prosperity and population. Fifteen years ago, or less, the inhabitants were not reckoned to exceed 2,000, they now number 15,000, owing to constant accessions from Egypt—there being a great and steady movement of population from that country to Palestine, of whole families and villages at a time, to exchange the austere rule of the Pasha for the milder or looser sway of the Sultan. Gaza, being about four miles from the frontier, and the first important place the fugitives reach, many of them remain there as inhabitants. Gaza, as it stands now, is a large but straggling town, covering about twenty times as much space as its population requires. Its houses are strongly constructed, consisting of a confused mixture of ancient and of the rudest modern architecture; ruins of magnificent palaces,

* Jer. xlvii. 5. † Amos i. 7. ‡ Zechariah ix 5.

rudely patched up with mud and brambles to shelter their present uncouth tenants; in the intervals appear the Bedouin's hut, plastered with cow-dung, and the well-smoked tents of the Zingari, or gipsy tribes.

Where, then, is the "baldness" of Gaza? How has it become forsaken?

A recent traveller, animadverting on the craving for the minute fulfilment of local prophecies, and on the absurdities and exaggerations into which many thus fall, adds: "Such conduct admits of the less excuse, because the proofs of accomplished prophecy are too numerous to leave any just cause for anxiety respecting those that remain unfulfilled or unexplained. It may even be that many a fulfilment has left no traces behind; the prediction and the fulfilment having been designed for a generation that has passed away. I have read some interpretations of prophecy which are calculated only to excite a smile. A recent traveller has discovered the fulfilment of the prediction that baldness should come upon Gaza (an Orientalism simply expressive of lamentation and woe), in the fact that the modern town is built round the head of the hill, leaving the upper part unoccupied, in the form of a tonsure."*

Now we agree with this writer as to the puerility of looking for *baldness* in this, and, we may add, in any other of the merely physical circumstances of the site. It is very clear to us that the term can have no such reference; to make bald, being merely to create cause for sorrowing, and of this we historically know that Gaza had enough. It seems to us that the sorrows of men afford a much more magnificent and forcible illustration of such a prophecy—and certainly a more direct one than the bareness of the tops of one or of many hills, or of the site or any part of it—seeing that this is a circumstance which equally belongs to ancient sites everywhere, and to numerous hills along this coast. There is nothing specific or distinctive in baldness thus interpreted.

But a greater apparent difficulty remains. The prophet, in the text before us, says that Gaza should be forsaken—and, be-

* BELDAM, *Italy and the East*

hold, it is now a populous town. For our own parts, we should be quite ready to conclude that this prophecy had been adequately fulfilled by the desolation in which it lay for many years, after its destruction by King Alexander Jannæus—who may, indeed, be deemed by that act to have accomplished the prophecies against Gaza. There is still, however, another, and some will think, a better answer in the fact, that the modern Gaza does not occupy the site of the ancient city. We must, however, confess to some doubts whether a city, rising in the immediate vicinity of an old one, and assuming identity by taking the same name—is not in fact as identically the same city, as a modern city can be of an ancient one; and on that ground we feel more certainty in resting upon the historical fact that Gaza *has been* forsaken.

However, that the modern Gaza does not stand on the site of the old one, had long been known, from the circumstance that the situation does not correspond with the intimations which have reached us, and which show that old Gaza must have stood much nearer to the sea. But the fact has only of late been established by the actual discovery of the ancient site. We owe this really interesting discovery to Dr. Keith, who has twice visited Palestine with views directed to the illustration of local prophecies. On his first visit, he sought in vain for any traces of the ancient Gaza, but in the second he was more favored. He surveyed the site more leisurely, and was confirmed in the opinion he had previously inclined to, that the ancient city was entombed in the sand. "In less than a mile from the present town in a direct line towards the sea, the sand commences, and all vegetation ceases. For more than a mile and a half in the same direction, the whole space is covered with sand, and in every hollow innumerable diminutive pieces of broken pottery and marble are spread over the surface. Passing along the shore to the south, we came to the ruins of an old wall that reached to the sea. Ten large massy fragments of wall were imbedded in the sand, or resting on it. A large square building close to the shore seems to be the remains of some public edifice. At the farther distance of about

two miles, are fragments of another wall. Four intermediate fountains still exist, nearly entire, in a line along the coast, which, doubtless, pertained to the ancient port of Gaza. For a short distance, indeed, the debris is less frequent, as if marking the space between it and the ancient city, but it again becomes plentiful in every hollow. About half a mile from the sea we saw three pedestals of beautiful marble. . . . Holes are still to be seen from which hewn stones had been taken; and the former secretary of Ibrahim Pasha at Gaza, and another native, stated that all the way between the present town and the sea, hewn stones of various sizes have been taken out of the sand, and carried to Gaza for building."

This is a very interesting statement, and, doubtless, the remains thus buried in the sand indicate the site of old Gaza. Still, the last circumstance does but help to strengthen the essential identity of the ancient and the modern Gaza; and in the doubt which we entertain whether a city rising close beside an old one, taking its name, and being in a great measure, built with its materials, is not historically identical with it, we remain disposed to take the New Testament as in this instance a sufficient interpreter of the Old, and to find in the Spirit's direction to Philip, ample corroboration of the prophecy: "Arise, and go towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, *which is desert.*" It was "desert," or forsaken then, and had been so for many years, as the prophet had foretold. What more need we require?

TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE EARTHQUAKE.—ZECHARIAH XIV. 5.

That must have been a dreadful earthquake which took place in the reign of king Uzziah; for it is clear that it made a deep impression upon the public mind. Amos dates from his prophetic call "two years before the earthquake;"* and,

* Amos i. 1.

so long as 250 years after, Zechariah reminds the people how their fathers "fled before the earthquake in the days of king Uzziah." One might greatly desire further information respecting an event so memorable; but it is not even mentioned in the Scriptural accounts of Uzziah's reign. Josephus, and other Jewish writers, however, speak of it from the traditions of their nation; and the statements furnished may be correct in the material facts, although they undoubtedly err in connecting it with Uzziah's sacrilege in attempting to burn incense upon the golden altar, as related in 2 Chron. xxvi. 16; for it can be chronologically shown, that the earthquake must have been many years anterior to the sacrilege.* Josephus, however, connects these events. He says, that at the moment of the king's offering, an earthquake shook the ground, and a rent was made in the temple through which the rays of the sun shone on the king's face, and made manifest the leprosy with which he had been smitten. At the same time, at a place called Eroge, fronting the city on the west, the mountain was rent, and one half fell and rolled itself four furlongs, stopping at the foot of the hill bounding the city on the east, so that the road and the king's gardens were spoiled by the obstruction. This was what is called a landslip—an event often connected with earthquakes, and seems to have been familiar to the sacred writers, as there are several allusions to it in the poetical books.

There is no other earthquake historically mentioned in Scripture, except that which took place at our Lord's crucifix-

* The vision of Amos "two years before the earthquake" was also in the reign of Jeroboam II., king of Israel. This king died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah, and consequently the earthquake could not have been *later* than the seventeenth of the same reign. But Uzziah reigned in all fifty-two years, and that his attempt to burn incense occurred in the latter end of his reign is manifest from the fact, that being then smitten with the leprosy, the regency was assumed by his son; and as this prince was but twenty-five years old at the demise of his father, he was so far from being in a condition to act as regent at the *latest* date assignable to the earthquake of Amos, that he could not have been born till ten years later.

ion. But the frequency of the allusions to these phenomena in the imagery of the Psalmist and other sacred writers, shows that earthquakes were but too well known to the Jewish people. In fact, Palestine is to this day much subject to earthquakes, though less so than some other parts of Syria—as at Aleppo, where few years pass without an earthquake being felt, but in general so slightly, that they cause but little alarm unless from the concurrence of other circumstances. When the shocks occur in the day-time they are often not perceived by persons walking in the streets and crowded bazaars; but in the quiet of the night they are often dreadful, and make an awful impression upon persons suddenly aroused from sleep.

Some years ago we made a large collection from histories and travels of facts relating to earthquakes in Syria. We found that most of them operated chiefly in the northern and lower parts of Syria, and Palestine was rarely mentioned as suffering much from their effects, and when visited by this calamity it was generally noticed that the highest parts of the land suffered least; and it is more than once observed that Jerusalem was but little affected by earthquakes from which other towns suffered severely. We shall not enter into details concerning them, being anxious to reserve our fullest attention for the last earthquake in Palestine; as respecting this we possess very ample and distinct information.

The earthquake occurred on the first day of the year 1837. We owe the best accounts of the circumstances and phenomena to an American missionary, the Rev. W. M. Thomson, and to a Jewish missionary, Mr. S. Calman, who were at Beirut at the time, and who immediately journeyed forth to the scene of the calamity in the hope of affording relief to the survivors. The particulars we proceed to give are gathered chiefly from Mr. Thomson's account of this journey, as it appeared in the *American Missionary Herald* for November, 1837.

The shock occurred about half-past four P.M., and was neither preceded nor followed by any remarkable phenomenon. A pale smoky haze obscured the sun, and gave a touch of sadness to the scene; and a lifeless and almost oppressive calm settled

down upon the face of nature. But these appearances are not uncommon in that country. At Beirut itself little damage was done; but for several days succeeding the shock, flying reports from various quarters gave frightful accounts of towns and villages overthrown, and of lives lost; but so slowly does authentic information travel in that country, that eight days had elapsed before any reports that could be relied on were received. Letters then arrived, stating that Safet was utterly destroyed, not a house remaining of any description; and that Tiberias and many other places had shared the same deplorable fate. Some of the letters stated that not a hundred of the inhabitants of Safet had escaped; while others, more correctly, declared that out of a population of 10,000, at least 6000 had perished.

A collection was then made for the relief of the sufferers, and Messrs. Thomson and Calman set forth on their benevolent mission. Ruin met them all the way. Sidon had suffered, and Tyre still more: but we must pass over the minor incidents, to reach the prime seat of the visitation. We may note, however, that at Ramash the people were at prayer in the church when the shock took place, and the building fell, and all of them, to the number of 130, perished. The only exception was the priest, who was then standing in the recess of the altar. At this place the travellers were shown a rent in the mountain a little to the east of the village. It was about a foot wide, and fifty feet long, and was said to have been wider when first discovered after the shock.

At length they reached Safet; and as they ascended the steep mountain upon whose top the city stands, they saw several rents and cracks in the earth and the rocks, giving painful indication of what might be expected above. The rest must be told in the language of the eye-witness himself, though with some compression:—

"Up to this moment I refused to credit the account, but one frightful glance convinced me that it was not in the power of language to overstate such a ruin. Suffice it to say, that this great town, which seemed to me like a bee-hive four years ago,

and was still more so only eighteen days ago, *is now no more.* Safet *was*, but is not. The Jewish portion, containing a population of five or six thousand, was built around and upon a very steep hill; so steep, indeed, is the hill, and so compactly built is the town, that the roof of the lower house formed the *street* of the one above, thus rising like a stairway over one another. And thus, when the tremendous shock dashed every house to the ground in a moment, the first fell upon the second, the second upon the third, that on the next, and so on to the end. And this is the true cause of the almost unprecedented destruction of life. Some of the lower houses are covered up to a great depth with the ruins of many others, which were above them. From this cause, also, it occurred that a vast number who were not instantaneously killed, perished before they could be dug out; and some were taken out five, six, and one, I was told, seven days after the shock, still alive. One solitary man, who had been a husband and father, told me that he found his wife, with one child under her arm, and the babe with the breast still in its mouth. He supposed the babe had not been killed by the falling ruins, but had died of hunger, endeavoring to draw nourishment from the breast of its lifeless mother. Parents frequently told me that they heard the voices of their little ones crying, 'Papa! papa!' 'Mamma! mamma!' fainter and fainter, till hushed in death, while they were either struggling in despair to free themselves, or laboring to remove the fallen timber and rocks from their children. O God of mercy! what a scene of horror must have been that long black night, which closed upon them half-an-hour after the overthrow!—without a light or the possibility of getting one—four fifths of the whole population under the ruins, dead or dying, with frightful groans—and the earth still trembling and shaking, as if terrified with the desolation she had wrought!

"What a dismal spectacle! As far as the eye can reach, nothing is seen but one vast chaos of stone and earth, timber and boards, tables, chairs, beds, and clothing, mingled in horrible confusion; men everywhere at work, worn out and woe-be-

gone, uncovering their houses in search of the mangled and putrefied bodies of departed friends, while here and there I noticed companies of two or three each, clambering over the ruins, bearing a dreadful load of corruption to the narrow house appointed for all living. I covered my face, and passed on through the half-living, wretched remnants of Safet. Some were weeping in despair, and some laughing in callousness more distressing. Here an old man sat solitary, on the wreck of his once crowded house; there a child was at play, too young to realize that it had neither father nor mother, brother nor relation in the wide world. They flocked around us—husbands that had lost their wives, wives their husbands, parents without children, children without parents, and not a few left the solitary remnants of large connections. The people were scattered abroad, above and below the ruins, in tents of old boards, old carpets, mats, canvas, brick, and earth, and not a few dwelling in the open air; while some poor wretches, wounded and bruised, were left amongst the prostrate buildings, every moment exposed to death, from the loose rocks around and above them."

The narrator goes on to give a most painful account of the miseries he witnessed in proceeding to visit the wounded. In one instance, "clambering over a pile of ruins, and entering a low vault by a hole, I found eight of the wounded crowded together, under a vast pile of crumbling rocks; some with legs broken in two or three places; others so horribly lacerated and swollen as scarcely to retain the shape of mortals; while all, left without washing, changing bandages, or dressing the wounds, were in such a deplorable state, as rendered it impossible for us to remain with them long enough to do them any good." They therefore proceeded to construct a wooden "shanty," as a kind of hospital, and had the wounded removed to it,—administering to their ailments and wants so far as their skill and means allowed; and on the 19th they record, that "the earth continued to tremble and to shake," and that there had been many slight, and some violent shocks, since their arrival.

At Tiberias the destruction of life was great, but much less, proportionally, than at Safet,—probably owing to the fact, that the former stands upon a plain, and the latter upon a high mountain. Not more than 700 perished, out of a population of 2,500; while at Safet, 4,000, out of 5,000 Jews and Christians, were killed, and not far short of 1,000 Moslems.

The volcanic character of the region which was the centre of this great disaster is well known—the very houses being to a great extent built with volcanic stone. This alone suffices to show the liability of this quarter to earthquakes, and attests their former occurrence; and if the earthquake from which people fled in the days of king Uzziah was as disastrous as that of 1837—and it was probably more so, as the land was then more full of towns and people—there was ample cause for its being so well remembered.

TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

EDOM.—MALACHI I. 3, 4.

Prophecy is very full of denunciations against Edom; and most of them bear a specific reference to the local habitation of the Edomites among the mountains of Seir, which stretch along the eastern side of the great valley extending between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah, by which name the eastern arm of the Red Sea is now known. They also point very emphatically to the metropolitan seat of the Edomite power in the midst of these mountains, in the city known in Scripture by the name of Selah and Joktheel. The latter name was given to it by a conquering king of Judah (2 Kings xiv. 7), but it had no permanence; and the older name, which means "a rock," eventually was rendered into the Greek name Petra, which has the same meaning; and by this name it is known in secular history.

The Edomites were not immediately affected by the Chaldean operations in those lands. By a timely submission, they appear to have won the favor of Nebuchadnezzar; and they

are named as among his willing auxiliaries in the invasion of Judah. They are represented as triumphing, with most fiendish malignity, over the ruin of their kinsmen, of whose desolated land they hoped to obtain a large portion for themselves. This behavior marked them out for Divine judgments, which were accordingly denounced by the prophets. Although these, in their final consummation, lay in the future; although the Edomites were not, like the Jews, carried into captivity; and although they succeeded in appropriating much of the southern parts of Judah, even unto Hebron,—yet did not they escape the first-fruits of the doom that hung over them. The interval from the destruction of Jerusalem to the prophecy of Malachi is not less than 190 years, during which we possess little or no information concerning them; and we know not how the impoverishment and desolation which he states them to have sustained was brought about. Our own impression is, that they were less favored by the Persian monarchs than they had been by the Chaldean kings; and that, on some ground of displeasure, they had suffered much from the Persians in their expeditions against Egypt, with which country, whose border impinged upon their own, the Edomites had intimate relations. At the time Malachi wrote, the Egyptians had lately shaken off for a time the Persian yoke; and it was this, probably, which inspired the Edomites with the hope and design of restoring their ruined cities, and of repairing the losses they had sustained. To this the prophet refers: "I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." The denunciations of the prophets, had, therefore, already been fulfilled in their primary signification; and with this evidence of later prophecy before us, did it stop here, we should be entitled to conclude that these anterior prophecies had been accomplished in their season, even if we *now* found the Edomites a flourishing people, and their cities standing in their strength. But now the last of the prophets comes forward to renew the prophecies that might seem to have lapsed by fulfilment, and gives them a final and ulterior signification, which was not to be frustrated by the present movement among the

Edomites. "Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people *against whom the Lord hath indignation forever;*"—which indignation, it is clear from the context, was to be manifested by throwing down all that might be rebuilt in repair of former desolations.

Now, much as there has been said and written of the prophecies respecting Edom, it appears to us that much force of illustration has been lost by neglecting to take into account the greatly later date of this prophecy to all the others, and the peculiar circumstances under which it was delivered; and to which we have, therefore, invited particular attention. Most remarkably have these words been fulfilled. The style of the remains existing in Petra, the metropolis of Edom, shows that they were framed at dates posterior to the time of this prophecy; and we know in fact historically, that it subsequently became a rich and flourishing city. The intention of the Edomites, as disclosed by the prophet, was therefore accomplished by themselves and their successors; but the Lord's intention has also been accomplished. Of the Edomites themselves, not even a name remains; and their city has for ages remained broken and desolate. The very site, indeed, had long been uncertain, and its place was undetermined in the maps. But, as in the index which closes a book, the various events of centuries are crowded into a few pages; so in these latter days, events that used to be spread over centuries are crowded together into days and years, and the old world history seems tame to the history we live. In this wonderful age events come in "Multitudes, multitudes to the valley of decision;" and old cities and nations—Egypt, Assyria, Edom; Thebes, Nineveh, Petra, are called forth from their tombs; and rattling their dry bones together, and shaking off the time-crust of many ages, they stand up in grim array to bear witness to God's truth. Edom was called—and Petra answered to her name. There she stands beautiful in her coat of many colors; but empty, and void, and waste. But that we feared

to repeat a thrice-told tale, with which all the readers of this volume must be familiar, we could speak largely of that marvellous city among the clefts of the rock," and the "height of the hills" in a deep fissure of the Seir mountains, with the tombs and habitations cut out in the enclosing cliffs of red, yellow, purple, azure, black and white stone, and enriched with façades cut in the living rock, and in a fantastic but not inelegant architecture, combining the styles of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

Singularly beautiful even in ruin, and with the freshness of youth still upon her brow, the utter desolation in which "the daughter of Edom" lies shut up amid the silence of her mountains, is most impressive, and even affecting. But all this was foreseen and foretold with great distinctness by the prophets; and these fearful denunciations, and their most exact fulfilment, furnish an invulnerable argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures; while the present state of the rich and beautiful region in which Edom dwelt, is a most awful monument of the Lord's displeasure against idolatry and wickedness. Yet, "Think ye that they were sinners above all others because they suffered such things? I tell ye nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

With the book containing this prediction concerning Edom, the roll of Old Testament prophecy closes. And it so closes with great and important significance, as the book is linked on to the New Testament by its last words, which, as interpreted by our Lord himself, clearly announce the mission of the Harbinger of Christ, with whose actual appearance the Gospel history opens. This perception of the relation which the prophecy of Malachi bears to the fulfilments of the New Testament, will be found to give to many of the prophet's intimations a strong and pointed emphasis, which may be overlooked when this consideration is not borne in mind.

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